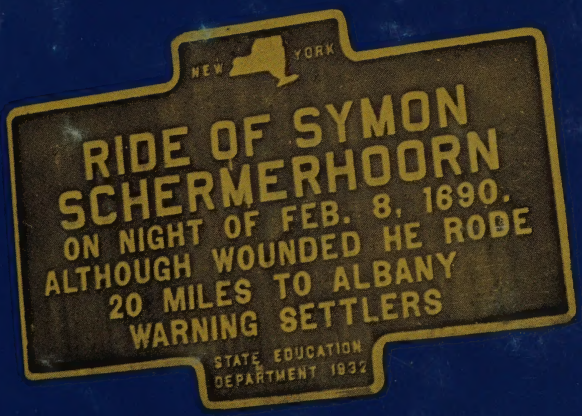
THE MARKERS SPEAK

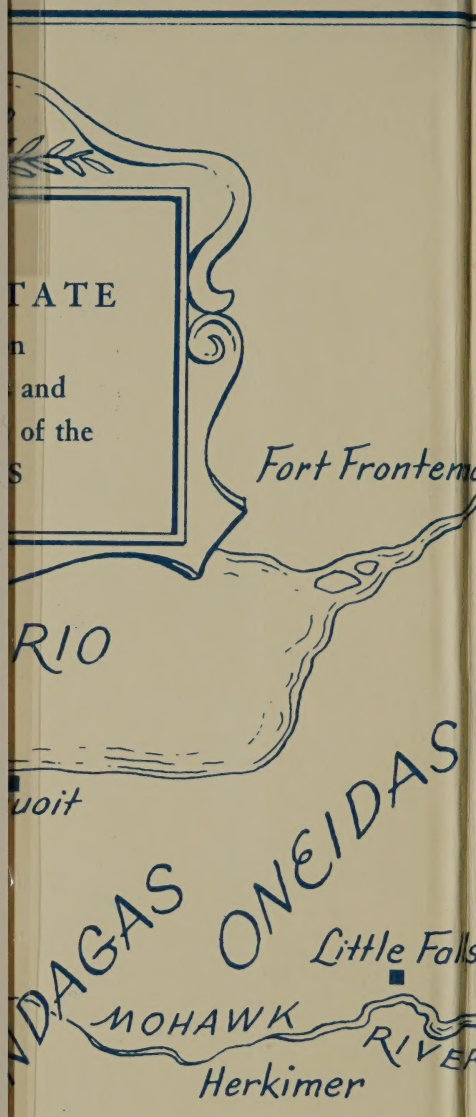


AN INFORMAL HISTORY
OF THE SCHENECTADY AREA

" . . . a most beautiful land . . . " and so it is today, three hundred years after Arent Van Curler founded Schenectady, gateway to the Mohawk Valley which so filled him with awe!

And how well the authors have caught the great events and the candid, revealing moments in the life of the gateway city as told in the Schenectady County Historical Society's new three-hundredth anniversary volume. From stockade days and Iroquois trails, from muster calls for revolution, from the stagecoach and Erie Canal era down to these days of jet engines and man-made diamonds created in the laboratories of the city's industrial giants, the story is written and pictured unforgettably. The table of contents is like an exciting call to a window . . . the massacre on a cold February night, the solemn visits of George Washington . . . the candle-lit windows of Union College celebrating her chartering, Schenectady's hour of terror, tragedy and good fortune — they are all there in this informal history for those of us who, like Arent Van Curler, are capable of wonder. As we look through the window of this book the three hundred years of history of this gateway city come alive.

CODMAN HISLOP,
Professor of American Civilization,
Union College.



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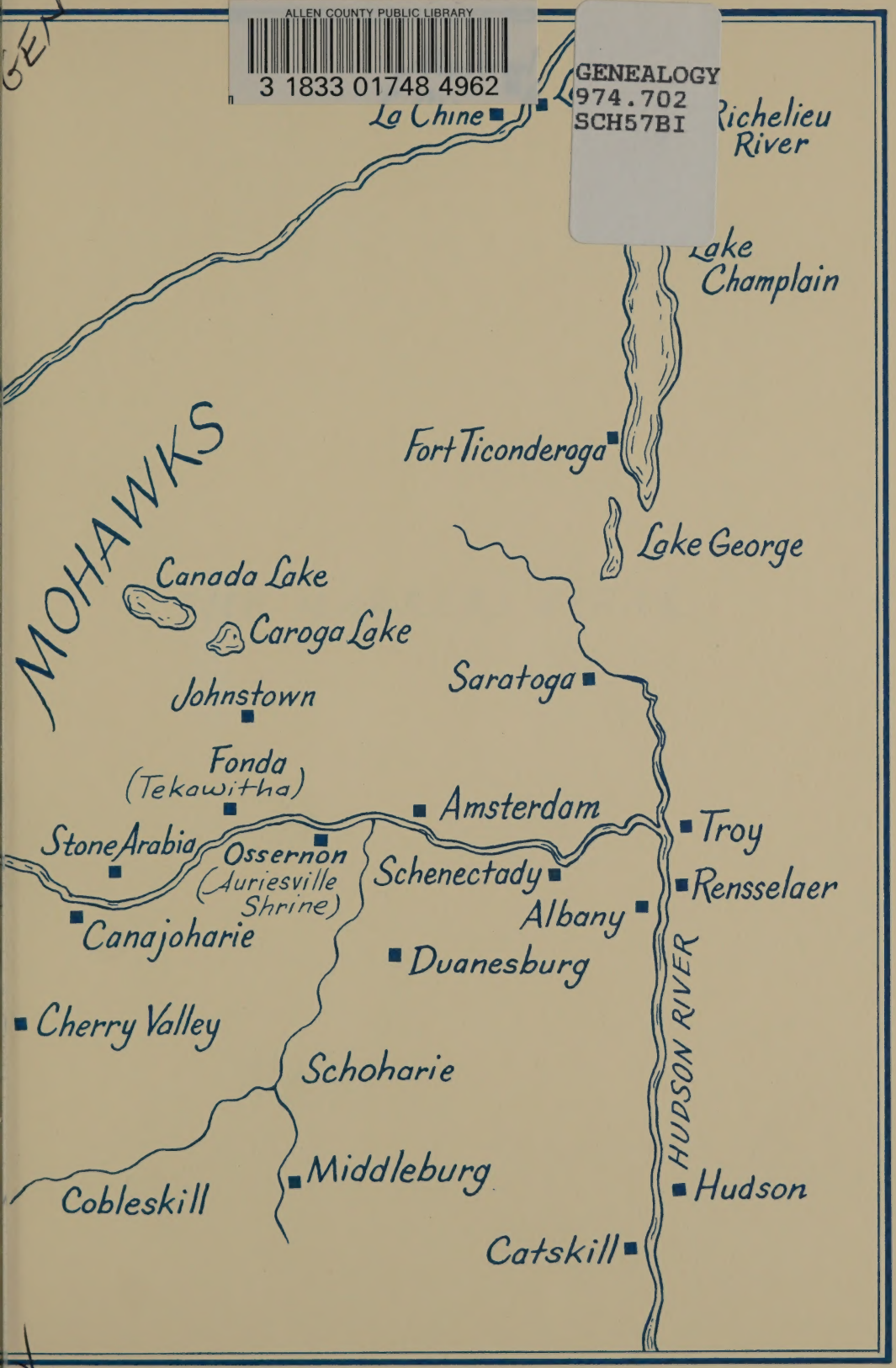

THE MARKERS SPEAK

The
MARKERS SPEAK

AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF THE SCHENECTADY AREA

by

JOHN J. BIRCH, LL.D.

PUBLISHED BY

THE SCHENECTADY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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FOREWORD

In 1961-1962 Schenectady joins the select list of cities in the United States which have been in existence for 300 years. Situated as it is at the Gateway to the West, Schenectady, during those years, has witnessed a multitude of important historical events both local and national. Some commemoration was needed but a "History" of the conventional variety was not desired. The older parts of the city, as well as the surrounding territory, contain a wealth of markers commemorating many of the most important of these events. Dr. John J. Birch, a Trustee and former President of the Schenectady County Historical Society, conceived the idea of a history based on these markers, letting them tell the story of Schenectady's development from a frontier trading post to its present importance in the nation and world. A committee consisting of Dr. Birch as Editor-in-chief, with Dr. John J. Vrooman and John A. Miller, was appointed to get material together for such a volume. THE MARKERS SPEAK is the culmination of Dr. Birch's original idea.

It is not a chronological recitation of a series of events. On the contrary, it is a set of vignettes or sketches – quick glimpses into the past. It does not have to be read consecutively. Perhaps therein lies one of its chief virtues. It is divided into several sections roughly chronological in order. However, each section is composed of relatively unrelated incidents although bearing on the general subject of the section. As a result it can be opened almost anywhere and read without having to follow any particular continuity. A glance at the table of contents will show the wide range of subjects covered, and the method used. Since the individual sections are self-contained THE MARKERS SPEAK lends itself to casual reading. It can also serve as a form of guidebook to the historical part of Schenectady. Maps are included showing the area where the markers are located, and numerous illustrations have been provided. A comprehensive index permits ready reference to much historical material not covered in the table of contents, but which is available throughout the work. This should make it valuable to teachers as well as to tourists and visitors to the city.

Not everything is here. This obviously would have been impractical. Actually many events and places historically important do not have markers, so that to keep within the scope of the work they could not

have been included. Many of them are adequately covered elsewhere. For instance, Dr. John Vrooman's *Forts and Firesides of the Mohawk Country* takes care of the most important of the old houses in the area. The Revolutionary War era is covered in detail in Hanson's *A History of Schenectady During the Revolution.* Individual churches have had their own histories, such as Dr. Birch's *The Pioneering Church of the Mohawk Valley*, and Hanson's *St. George's Church, Schenectady*, and others.

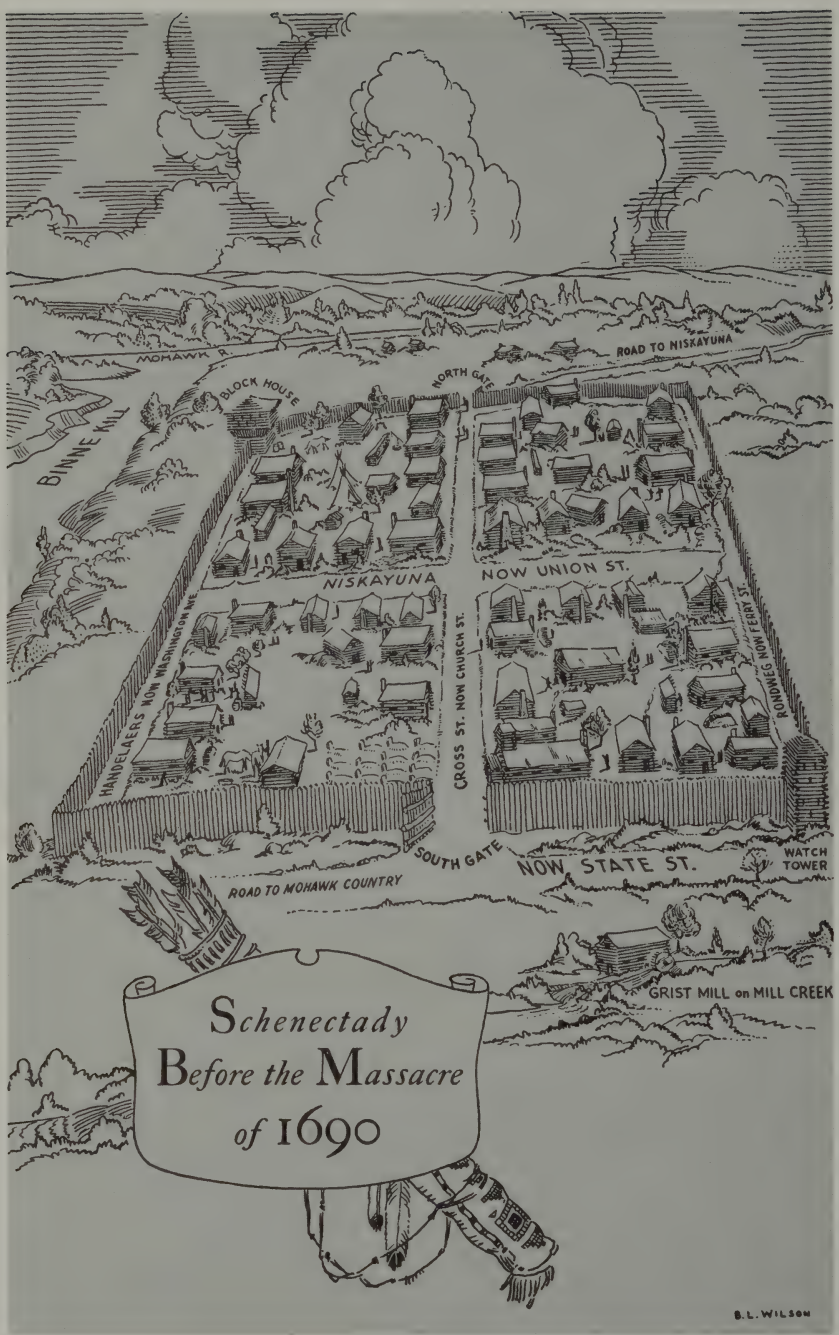
No attempt has been made to include every detail, or even every phase of Schenectady's growth. The many markers cover a wide cross-section of the city's history so that if we listen to what they tell both directly and by inference, an excellent outline of Schenectady's progress can be obtained. And Schenectady has progressed in 300 years. From a predominantly Dutch backwoods settlement, almost isolated from its nearest neighbor Beverwyck (Albany), it has developed into a city essentially universal in outlook. Instead of the stolid Dutch burghers it now boasts of citizens representing all parts of the United States and many foreign countries. It becomes truly universal in the contribution of its people to the advancement of the Space Age.

Van Curler's "most beautiful land on the Mohawk river that eye ever saw . . ." has had resources for the betterment of all peoples far beyond his wildest dreams.

John W. Harper, *Pres.*
Schenectady County
Historical Society

Schenectady
August 15, 1962

PROLOGUE


MOHAWK R.
ROAD TO NISKAYUNA
BLOCK HOUSE
NORTH GATE
BINNE HILL
NISKAYUNA
NOW UNION ST.
HANDELAERS NOW WASHINGTON AVE
CROSS ST. NOW CHURCH ST.
RONDWEG NOW FERRY ST.
SOUTH GATE
NOW STATE ST.
WATCH TOWER
ROAD TO MOHAWK COUNTRY
GRIST MILL on MILL CREEK
Schenectady Before the Massacre of 1690
B.L. WILSON

PROLOGUE

THE EARLIEST DUTCH COLONIES IN THE UPPER HUDSON 1609 to 1642

ANY SEGMENT of history becomes far easier to follow once one is in a position to connect its events to what had happened before and to what was happening elsewhere at the same time. Thus the beginnings of Schenectady need to be seen against a broader background. At the very least, it is necessary to recall the main outlines of the earlier Dutch colonization in the Upper Hudson Valley.

The brief review begins, curiously, not with a Dutchman at all, but with an Englishman. Henry Hudson was a navigator employed by Dutch merchants to search for a "northwest passage" — a shorter route by water to the Far East. Although his search was unsuccessful, he did discover for the Dutch a trade far more lucrative than that with the Indies.

Hudson sailed from Amsterdam, Holland, early in 1609. Five months later he entered New York Harbor and then proceeded up the river which bears his name. He reached the site of present-day Albany in September. His ship, the *Half Moon*, then rode at anchor while its crew explored farther upstream until they were convinced they had reached the head of navigation. Disappointed and discouraged, Hudson reluctantly turned his prow downstream, but not before he had met and had dealings, both peaceful and violent, with the many native Indians who came crowding in wonderment to admire his ship. The *Half Moon*, after the manner of the day, was gaily decorated. The carved figure of a lion, painted a brilliant red except for a heavy, glowing, golden mane, adorned her bow; on her impressively high stern was painted an azure blue panel on which shone resplendently a silver crescent depicting the "man-in-the-moon" in profile.

As a result of Hudson's discovery of this promising area, Dutch traders arrived at the site of Albany in 1611, searching for beaver skins. During the next three years, Hendrick Christiaesen, Adriaen Block, Cornelis May, and others made further explorations, and then formed an association called the United New Netherland Company. They obtained from the States General of Holland the exclusive right to carry on

trade for a period of three years in what was then called "New Netherland." With a keen appreciation of this location at the head of navigation on the Hudson a few miles south of where two main arteries of travel converged – the Hudson River from the north and the Mohawk River from the west – they built a stockade called Fort Nassau on one of the islands. This name honored the Prince of Nassau, Stadtholder of New Netherlands. Here, in 1614, they formed the first permanent settlement in this part of the New World. In 1618 the Fort was destroyed by river floods but another was built on the mainland, near the mouth of the Normanskill, close to the site of the present Port of Albany. It was here, many believe, that the Treaty of Tawasentha was first signed in 1618, Tawasentha being the Indian name for the valley of the Normanskill. This Treaty was a most important early agreement between the Dutch and the Iroquois which guaranteed friendly trade relations and mutual nonaggression. During the next two centuries the Treaty was ratified over and over again as the original precedent for a continuing close alliance between the Dutch and the New York State Indians. Longfellow mentions "the vale of Tawasentha" in his poem "Hiawatha."

In 1621 the States General of the Netherlands granted to a newly-formed West India Company control over all the recently-discovered land in the Upper Hudson. This company, with an initial capital of $2,800,000, superseded the earlier company, and was formed to develop the lands that Hudson had discovered. In the spring of 1624 the company began its efforts at permanent settlement. The ship *New Netherland* was sent out from Holland, in the charge of Captain Cornelis May, the original Director General (Governor) of the new Dutch territory. She carried some 30 families who were to be the first permanent settlers. They were largely Walloons – that is, Protestants from northern France and from Belgium who had fled from their homelands to the more liberal-minded Holland in quest of religious freedom. Among the passengers were some Dutch families as well. But not all of these immigrants were destined to reach the Albany area. Some were left at New Amsterdam (New York) to found other settlements in that area. Only about 18 families continued with Captain May up the Hudson.

Fort Nassau was now abandoned and another palisaded enclosure was built which was named Fort Orange, after the Dutch Prince of Orange. It stood on the waterfront at what is now "Steamboat Square," near the foot of present-day State Street in Albany. Evidently these settlers were

active traders, for it is recorded that when the *New Netherland* returned to Holland she carried in her hold 500 beaver and 300 otter pelts which were sold in Amsterdam for $10,000.

Unfortunately, no list of names of these first settlers has been preserved, but it is known that Catalina Trice, a Parisian, was among them. Records show that in later years she declared that the settlers, after building their huts of bark, traded with the Indians who "came dayly with multitude of Bever and traded them with the Christians." Thus was continued an alliance and friendship, first formed at Fort Nassau, which was later to become an important factor in the wars between the French and the English for the possession of the entire North American continent.

In the 1620's the West India Company and its settlers devoted most of their energies to the fur trade, but some of the Company's directors felt this to be a mistake. Principal among these was Kiliaen Van Rensselaer.[1]

Kiliaen, of whom no portrait exists, was born about 1580 at Hasselt, Holland, the son of the captain of a company of foot soldiers. His father died in rather straitened circumstances soon after Kiliaen was born. The boy was then placed in the care of an uncle, a jeweler, who acted as his guardian. Kiliaen became his uncle's apprentice and soon learned the jeweler's trade. A letter written in 1608 discloses that Kiliaen was then living in Prague looking after the jewelry business of his uncle, who enjoyed the trade of the Imperial Court. In 1616 Kiliaen married a distant relative, an heiress, and undoubtedly built a new home for his bride in Amsterdam. He was highly esteemed among his associates as a keen, clearheaded businessman and an able and practical merchant.

Shortly after the formation of the West India Company, Van Rensselaer, as one of its first directors, had urged that the Company adopt a long-range plan of intensive colonization based on agriculture. However, some of the other directors were unwilling to wait for the relatively slow returns from farming and stock raising; they preferred to rely on the quicker profits from the fur trade. Thus, according to a memorandum written by Kiliaen in 1633, colonists were still being sent out

---

[1]Van Rensselaer's first name, like many of the names mentioned here, is spelled variously in old documents and correspondence. Except when actually quoting such material, the present author has usually adopted whatever Americanized spelling seems to be preferred by modern writers.

as late as 1623 with instructions simply to dwell on the Company's land as free persons and enjoy the proceeds from fur trading. By the late 1620's this policy had made the Company far less successful than anticipated, and Van Rensselaer was so discouraged that he offered to sell his land to the Company. But now, to clear themselves of blame, those who, with him, had urged the long-range plan offered to undertake colonization at their own expense, providing the Company would grant them additional concessions. The further privileges which were allowed are stated in a charter entitled "Freedoms and Exemptions" and were acceptable to those who had offered themselves as patroons. This charter was agreed to and approved by the States General in 1629.

In brief, the liberalized charter provided that members of the Company who, within four years, should establish in New Netherland a colony of 50 adults would be acknowledged as Patroons and "have the right to administer civil and criminal justice within the boundaries of their particular colonies and to appoint and discharge local officers of government; and further to enjoy the privileges of milling, hunting, fowling and fishing as at that time were usually attached to the manors of the Netherlands."

Van Rensselaer was the first to apply for this authority and on January 13, 1629, notified the directors of the Company that he "would send men to report what they should find." These men reported favorably and selected an area surrounding Fort Orange. In case of Indian attack this location would, they felt, be defensible. Next, in compliance with a request from Van Rensselaer, the Commander at Fort Orange concluded a series of land purchases for him from the Mohican Indians. The purchased land ran along the Hudson from the mouth of the Mohawk River southward 24 miles to a point below Beeren (Bear) Island (just below Coeymans) and to a distance of 24 miles to the west and a like distance to the east, from the river. This huge tract embraced well over 700,000 acres. It, of course, included the site of Fort Orange, a fact that was later to become a source of trouble. The deed covering the purchase was dated August 13, 1630, and was certified to by Peter Minuet, then Director of New Netherland, and others and "done at the aforesaid island of Manahatas and Fort Amsterdam."

Van Rensselaer was keen enough to anticipate a profit, which he estimated at 100 guilders (about $40) per man per year, for provisioning the garrison, then numbering 25 soldiers. Several more patroonships

were established by other individuals, in the vicinity of New Amsterdam and in Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. But none of them equaled in size or importance Van Rensselaer's "Colonie of Rensselaerwyck." In fact, by 1637 all other patroonships had been sold back to the West India Company because of the difficulties the patroons experienced in meeting the terms of the contracts under which their holdings had been established.

The colonists at Fort Orange had had no civil government from the time of the first arrivals in 1624. They were, however, subject to the rulings of the captain of whatever ship brought them to the colony, as was the case with those who came with Captain May. This tradition continued until August, 1634, when the first court of the colony was organized.

In that year Jacob Albertsz Planck, the first *schout*, or sheriff, arrived aboard the *De Eendracht*. The patroon, not having been satisfied with the administrations of his earlier agents, had instructed Planck "to exercise proper supervision over all the men, farms, animals, and everything else that may have to be done in the Colony."

The patroon's settlers had at first chosen to build their huts on the west side of the river, where they were protected by the Fort, rather than on the east side at Gronen Bosch (Pine Woods) to which Van Rensselaer had directed them. Doubtless the patroon would have approved had he been present in person. As a matter of fact, Van Rensselaer never visited his princely domain; perhaps he was too much occupied with his pearls and diamonds.

By 1643 there were from 25 to 30 houses, occupied by about 100 settlers, clustered closely about the walls of the Fort. In 1648, five years after Kiliaen's death, his heirs sent over Brant Van Slichtenhorst as Director of the Colony of Rensselaerwyck. He encouraged further building near the Fort. It was this construction which brought trouble with Pieter Stuyvesant, the new Director General or Governor. This most famous of the Dutch governors arrived in New Amsterdam in 1647. He was no phlegmatic Dutchman – far from it! He had been a soldier and had lost a leg while stationed in the Caribbean as Governor of the Dutch Island of Curacao. He was autocratic, even tyrannical, and subject to fits of violent anger.

His predecessors in office had not objected to the colonists' building so close to Fort Orange, fearing the ill will of the powerful Patroon

back home. But when Stuyvesant heard of the new construction he flew into a rage. Afraid of neither man nor devil, he went directly to Fort Orange and ordered the offending houses removed. To forestall further controversy, he declared that the land within 600 paces of the Fort and principal settlement of New Netherland had, from the first, been reserved by the West India Company. It is reported that, in order to establish the limits of the Company's territory, Stuyvesant ordered a cannon to be fired to the north and the south. The range of the cannon balls set the boundaries of the "reserve." Evidently there had been little or no building up the slope of the hills to the west for no mention is made of the firing of cannon in this direction.

Director Stuyvesant's actions were rather highhanded in view of the fact that his Company actually held no legal title to the site, having occupied it without purchasing it from the Indians. It was, however, included in the land which Kiliaen Van Rensselaer did buy in 1630, only five years after the Company had established its fortified trading post.

But Stuyvesant, as Governor, was the strongest man on the spot, and he took further steps: he renamed the settlement "Beverwyck" (The Place of Beavers), he established a village court, and he set aside a tract of land as a village commons for the use of the poor.

The controversy over the title to the site of Fort Orange continued until 1652, when a proclamation drawn by the Director General was issued, removing the settlement of Beverwyck from the jurisdiction of the patroon; the village subsequently became the City of Albany. Yet even this was not final, for the Van Rensselaer heirs continued to contend for the title to the site of the town. In the 1680's the Van Rensselaers petitioned the English Governor, Thomas Dongan, for a patent which would include the site of Albany. Though Dongan conceded that the site belonged to the Van Rensselaers by virtue of their purchase of the land from the Indians, he declined to grant their request, stating that "it was not to his Majesty's interest that the second [largest] town of the government should be in the hands of any particular men."

In 1648 neither the settlers nor Van Rensselaer's agents took kindly to Stuyvesant's order to remove the homes about the Fort, yet they reluctantly acquiesced. The measure angered the Indians, also, for they had been allowed to sleep in the patroon's trading house when they brought pelts for barter – a permission shrewdly granted by the

patroon's agents, who were not above joining in this trade, even though it was at the time illicit for them, being reserved as the exclusive business of the patroon.

It was an almost impossible task to insure that all business done at Fort Orange was in the interest of the patroon without interfering with or curtailing the interests of the West India Company. In an effort to protect his interests, the first patroon built a fortified settlement on Beeren Island which he named "Rensselaerstyn." He directed that it was "to be peopled and settled as a place of retreat to which persons can conveniently, and with the smallest boats, betake themselves in time of need." This island was situated at the southern limits of Rensselaerwyck. Its further – and no doubt its most important – purpose was to serve as a sort of "customs house," where merchandise being shipped into or leaving the colony was to be inspected by the patroon's armed agent. Ships flying the flag of the West India Company were exempt from inspection. The regulation was meant to keep out unknown and unwanted traders who sought to transact business with the settlers at Fort Orange and with the Indians. Each of the patroon's settlers had been compelled, before being accepted and sent to the colony, to sign a contract obligating him to make all purchases and sales through or to the agents of the patroon. The latter thus controlled all of the settlers' business dealings. As for the Indians, they traded surreptitiously with whom they pleased and any business they did with anyone other than a patroon's agent meant a loss of profit to the patroon. The latter wrote complainingly of these itinerant traders who found their way into the colony: "They ruin the whole trade in furs as well for the West India Company as for myself by raising the price of furs, the larger part of the profit going to the savages and the small remaining portion to the private traders so that there is nothing left."

The patroon placed Nicholas Coorn in charge of Beeren Island with explicit orders to examine the cargoes of all passing ships other than those of the West India Company. A toll of five guilders ($2) was imposed upon each ship passing up or down the river. Also, the ship's colors were to be lowered. In 1643, before Governor Stuyvesant's administration, a ship captained by a Skipper Loockermans sailed from Fort Orange for New Amsterdam. As he came abreast of Beeren Island he was commanded to lay to, but refused to do so. Coorn fired on the ship and down came its colors. Loockermans sailed on to New

Amsterdam, where he reported the damage, and the insult, to the current Director, Kieft. Coorn was immediately brought to trial, fined, and ordered to erect no more fortifications at Beeren Island. But Coorn was not to be frightened by such orders. He protested the verdict and continued inspections until 1648, some four years after the death of the first patroon.

At the heart of these conflicts, of course, was the whole question of the respective jurisdictions of the patroon and the West India Company. Were the patroons supreme in their colonies as their agreements with the Company stipulated? Or did the Company still have its stipulated rights within the boundaries of the patroonship? The Company's directors did not approve the plan of having these large areas of their domain under control other than their own. Thus it was a question of "a sovereignty within a sovereignty," and it was not settled for many years.

So far nothing has been said of Arent Van Curler, cousin of the first patroon. Van Curler arrived in the colony in 1638, then but a young man of 18, to serve as an administrative agent of the patroon. A quarter of a century later he became the founder of Schenectady. He was a liberally educated man who, despite his youth, gained a reputation for fair dealing; he represented the ideals of the best of the Netherlands. He was born in Nijkerk, Province of Gelderland, Holland, February 6, 1620, in an era marked by the independence of the Dutch Republic and at a time when Amsterdam was the outstanding city of all Europe and Holland held supremacy over England as mistress of the seas.

Van Curler arrived at New Amsterdam on the same ship that brought Pieter Minuet, Stuyvesant's predecessor as Governor of New Netherland. Van Curler's duty was to assist Sheriff Jacob Albertsz Planck, who had taken office three years earlier, and to see that Patroon Van Rensselaer was properly and fully informed of all that took place in the Colony. The latter charge meant a great deal of laborious letter-writing. In a letter to Arent, the patroon outlined what was expected of him:

This day, 10th May [1638]

Arent van Coorler, assistant.

Honorable, discreet cousin arent van coorler: I hope that by this time, with God's help, you have arrived in my colony and duly delivered there the goods which you took with you and that ac-

cording to my wish you have already begun noting everything down exactly and writing me of it, that I may know how things stand there, especially as to the increase of the animals, horses, cows, etc: also, that you kept a correct account of all goods which I sent heretofore and now send herewith, and where they may be sold with profit. In all things, however, you will have to submit yourself to your comiss [Planck] with whom you will serve so that he will not have to complain of you; but aside from that you may write me of every detail and if you take good care of your affairs and write and advise me at length, I will when the opportunity offers itself and in proportion to your capacity, also take care of your promotion and advancement, but one has to be a servant before one can be master. Write me also definitely about the tobacco planting, how it has succeeded there, and of the farms and of the saw and grist mills and what further there may be of interest, and do not let any opportunity for writing me go by as we long very much for news here. Your father is still well and your brother is at present staying at my house; both send many greetings, etc.

From this letter it is clear that the patroon was a somewhat exacting master; yet, in his defense, one senses the great difficulties he must have encountered in managing his huge estate from so great a distance, and one recalls the length of time required for an exchange of letters between the Old World and the New.

It must also be held in mind that Van Curler was still in his teens; to him the strangeness of the forest, the Indians, the abundance of fish and game, and countless other excitements of everyday living must have been extremely distracting. But despite these tempting diversions, Arent must have, in a measure, pleased the patroon, for on May 12, 1639, the latter wrote:

Arent van Corler, who sailed as assistant of the colony of Rensselaerwyck, is hereby promoted to and qualified as secretary and bookkeeper of the said colony, to enter upon records faithfully, all resolutions and public instruments; also to keep proper books and accounts of the increase of the animals as well as their deaths, indicating the day and month and as far as possible, the cause of their death . . .

The same day, and doubtless by the very ship that brought the foregoing letter to Van Curler, Planck also heard from the patroon:

> Yours sent by my small boat Rensselaerwyck as well as the others sent by marten gerretsen, I have duly received. All I ask for is to have but half as much writing from you as you have from me; this is certainly reasonable, for if everything does not come to your mind, all you have to do is to place my letters before you, examine everything and do as I do, advising me of each matter separately. I send you the name of the people whom I send over, each one by itself and you write but in general that there have arrived 24 persons besides the women. That is not enough . . .

While Van Rensselaer certainly expected a great deal from Van Curler, it is clear from the patroon's letters to various important people in the New World that he did what he could to see that Van Curler was well received and given whatever assistance was available. For example, on June 29, 1637, Van Rensselaer wrote to the man who was about to become the latest Director of New Netherland, Pieter Minuet, as follows:

> Heer commandeur; the bearer of this letter, my cousin, arent van corler, sailing to my colony as assistant, is recommended to you to accomodate him as much as your honor's situation will allow . . . I should also be much pleased, inasmuch as he is still young and inexperienced, if you had a little instruction given him in the process of ship's bookkeeping as well as keeping land accounts, as his master, Jacob Planck, with whom he will be, is not too expert in these matters himself.

Minuet was then sailing to assume the directorship, but not being certain just when Minuet's predecessor might leave New Amsterdam, the patroon thought it best to write him as well. This he did on December 26, 1637:

> Mon Cousin,
> . . . I had engaged 6 persons to go over, too, among them our cousin, arent van corler, a young man of good principals over whom your father is now appointed guardian; but as he went home once more to prepare himself, he will probably come too late as the lighter must go at once . . .

Some five years later, in June, 1642, another important personage came to Rensselaerwyck. He was Domine Johannes Megapolensis, who signed a contract with the patroon on April 6th of that year to serve for six years as the domine (minister) in the colony, the providing of a domine being one of the obligations assumed by the patroon when he agreed to form the colony. When Megapolensis left Holland with his wife and two children, he carried with him an extraordinarily long "memorandum" of instructions from the patroon. Among other things, he was to "go at once to my cousin, Arent van Corler and stay with him until he shall find a convenient opportunity . . . to have a suitable though inexpensive temporary house built with the intention, later, when the colony is a little more prosperous, of having a larger house build for him. Meanwhile, as I fear the church will not be finished yet, he shall select the best place that can be found to preach the word of God."

The Domine served from August of the year of his arrival until the summer of 1649, when of his own volition he left for New Amsterdam. While in the colony, he lived on the east side of the river in the Gronen Bosch. Here, in his own house, he held religious services until about 1647, when the patroon's trading house at Fort Orange was adapted for church purposes.

Meanwhile, young Arent Van Curler was rapidly establishing himself in the Albany Colony. He was also "feeling his oats." In March, 1643, Van Rensselaer again wrote the Domine, in part as follows:

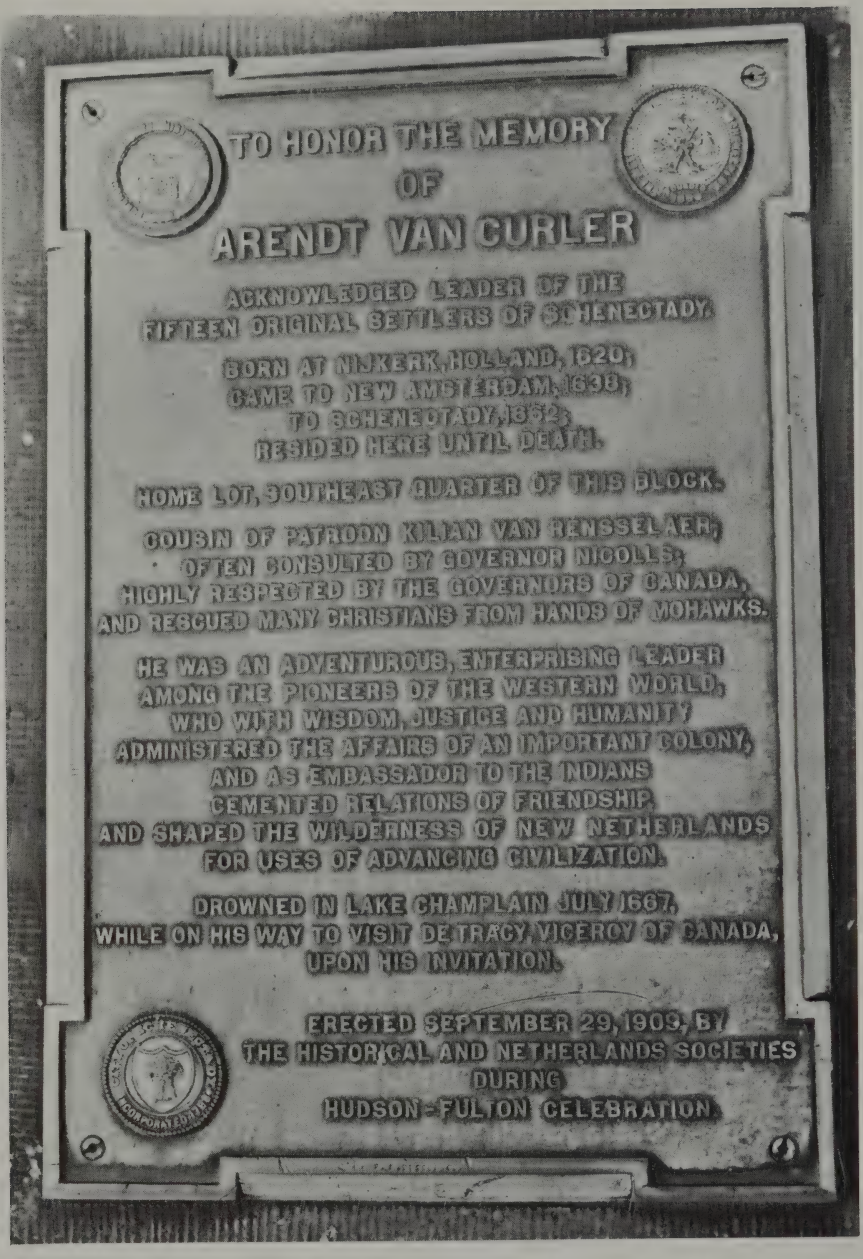
> I am advised by others of the expensive house of Arent van Corler; tell him in my name that I know of it and that he must remedy it. He must not keep the pace of Director Kieft which I cannot follow. Exhort the officer also in my name to be humble, for he shows many signs of ambition . . . As to the evil rumors that Corler visits a certain woman in Fort Orange, this gives me much ground for serious reflection. If it is true, you can, as pastor, admonish him to keep away from her in order to avoid all scandal, and, if you think it necessary, also prohibit it in my name, especially if the substance of the suspicion proves true.

The "certain woman in Fort Orange" may have been Antonia Slaghboom, whom Van Curler married, apparently that same year. She was

the widow of Jonas Bronck, a former resident of Fort Orange with whom Arent had been acquainted and who had bought land and removed to the vicinity of Coxsackie, where the old Bronck house still stands. More likely the woman was not Antonia at all, but another person — not his wife — to whom Arent eventually left his estate.

One fact, however, is certain: in June of 1643 Van Curler himself wrote a letter — a very long one, addressed to Kiliaen Van Rensselaer in Amsterdam — which is of great interest to any historian of the period and especially of Schenectady. Indeed, the text of this letter is echoed in the second marker.

THE FOUNDING AND THE FIRST DECADES


TO HONOR THE MEMORY
OF
ARENDT VAN CURLER
ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER OF THE
FIFTEEN ORIGINAL SETTLERS OF SCHENECTADY.
BORN AT NIJKERK, HOLLAND, 1620;
CAME TO NEW AMSTERDAM, 1638;
TO SCHENECTADY, 1652;
RESIDED HERE UNTIL DEATH.
HOME LOT, SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THIS BLOCK.
COUSIN OF PATROON KILIAN VAN RENSSELAER;
OFTEN CONSULTED BY GOVERNOR NICOLLS;
HIGHLY RESPECTED BY THE GOVERNORS OF CANADA,
AND RESCUED MANY CHRISTIANS FROM HANDS OF MOHAWKS.
HE WAS AN ADVENTUROUS, ENTERPRISING LEADER
AMONG THE PIONEERS OF THE WESTERN WORLD,
WHO WITH WISDOM, JUSTICE AND HUMANITY
ADMINISTERED THE AFFAIRS OF AN IMPORTANT COLONY,
AND AS EMBASSADOR TO THE INDIANS
CEMENTED RELATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP,
AND SHAPED THE WILDERNESS OF NEW NETHERLANDS
FOR USES OF ADVANCING CIVILIZATION.
DROWNED IN LAKE CHAMPLAIN JULY 1667,
WHILE ON HIS WAY TO VISIT DE TRACY, VICEROY OF CANADA,
UPON HIS INVITATION.
ERECTED SEPTEMBER 29, 1909, BY
THE HISTORICAL AND NETHERLANDS SOCIETIES
DURING
HUDSON-FULTON CELEBRATION.

TABLET HONORING THE MEMORY OF ARENT VAN CURLER
Leader of the Fifteen Original Settlers of Schenectady,
Tablet is at the corner of Union and Church Sts.

MARKERS RECALLING THE FOUNDING AND THE FIRST DECADES 1642 to 1690

MARKER ONE: The Pre-Columbian Residents

The countryside around Schenectady contains many reminders that Arent Van Curler and his fellow Dutchmen were relatively late comers to the Mohawk Valley. For instance, in Glenville, about half a mile northwest of Hoffmans, stands this marker:

> KINAQUARIONES
> Site of Archaic Algonkian Village; Its Corn Pits Yet Remain. Through This Vale Ran A Great And Ancient Path, Trod By Many Races.

Indians had inhabited, farmed, and hunted this Mohawk region for untold centuries before any white man ever saw it. A spearhead and knife found near Collins Lake, Scotia, have been identified by archeologists as over 5,000 years old, and current diggings near the Naval Supply Depot have turned up objects associated with even earlier tribes. Spear points of the first millenium AD have been found at several sites in this area. Another marker, not far from the Wolf Hollow Road, commemorates a former post-glacial lake around which lived very early Indians. Just off the Mohawk Turnpike (Route 5), near Van Buren's Cabins, is a pre-Columbian cemetery and half a mile north is the burial place attributed to the Mound Builders, once occupants of the Mohawk Valley. Along this waterway ran an ancient trail traversed by many races, not only the archaic Algonkians but undoubtedly other still unknown nations of Indians.

MARKER TWO: Van Curler's Romance with the *Groote Vlachte*

The following marker used to stand at the eastern end of Schenectady's Great Western Bridge across the Mohawk:

> **"THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LAND"**
> **"On the Mohawk River there Lies the Most Beautiful Land that the Eye of Man Ever Beheld," wrote Arent Van Curler in 1642.**

It commemorates the moment at which Van Curler first looked upon the site which he was destined, almost 20 years later, to colonize. The text of the marker is drawn from a letter[1] which he wrote to Kiliaen Van Rensselaer in Amsterdam, Holland, during the summer of 1643. In view of the fact that it misdates and slightly misquotes the letter, this marker's disappearance is perhaps no great loss.

In his letter, Van Curler told his employer, the patroon, of a journey he had taken the preceding fall from Fort Orange westward into the Mohawk Valley. He had been sent out by the Albany colonists to attempt the ransom of several Frenchmen captured by the Mohawks. The captives, including the Jesuit Father Isaac Jogues, were being held at the Mohawks' "Castle" at Ossernon, now known as Auriesville, "The Shrine of the North American Martyrs." (A "castle" was merely an Indian village fortified by means of a surrounding stockade.) Although Van Curler was well received by the Indians, who had long since come to trust and respect him in spite of his youth, he was unable to negotiate the release of the prisoners. (One of the prisoners, Father Jogues, finally managed to escape and actually got back to France, but three years later he returned, was recaptured, and was cruelly put to death by the Mohawks.)

Though his rescue mission failed, Van Curler's trip was not a total loss: the broad fertile lowlands and islands free from trees which he found at the bend of the Mohawk made a deep impression on him. This seemed to him an ideal area for agriculture, and he wrote, "Within half-a-day's journey from the Colonie, lies the most beautiful land on the Mohawk river that eye ever saw . . ."

---

[1]Because of the vivid backstage glimpse it gives into the intricate problems faced by the early colonizers and their agents, the full text of Van Curler's letter is appended to this book.

Formerly the Indians had cultivated the site, but their occupation was, after all, the chase. The proximity of the white settlers along the Hudson had already so exhausted their game that the Mohawks were eager to move to better hunting grounds. Thus Van Curler would have faced little trouble in arranging a purchase.

But, at this period in his life, Arent Van Curler was busy with other matters. In 1643 he married Antonia Slaghboom, and during the same year his employer, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, died, leaving his estate to his eldest son, still a minor. The next year – in 1644 – Van Curler went to Holland and while there obtained from the first patroon's heirs a six-year lease to what the records commonly refer to as the best farm in the Colony of Rensselaerwyck. This was "The Flatts," located just south of present-day Watervliet. A typical old Dutch brick house still stands there. On his return to the colony, Arent took possession of this property, but after two years transferred the lease to another tenant.

However, he could not so easily give up his vivid recollection of the fertile site on the Mohawk which had fascinated him in 1642. Almost 20 years later, the spot was still very much in his mind; for in the summer of 1661 he and some associates applied to Governor Stuyvesant for permission to buy the land which is now the site of the city of Schenectady. Most of his associates were dissatisfied tenants of the patroon, and anxious to own outright the land on which they lived. Further, it is likely that Van Curler's continuing enthusiasm was contagious. Also, they knew him as a man of rare ability and well educated for the times. And, finally, they sensed that his personal relations with influential officials at New Amsterdam, including the Governor himself, gave them an opportunity not likely to recur.

Van Curler's letter to the Governor under the date of June 18, 1661, reads as follows:

Right Honorable Sir,
My Lord,

When last at Manhatans I informed your Honor that there were some friends and well wishers, who were well inclined with your Honor's knowledge and approbation to take possession of and till the Groote Vlachte [Great Flat] well known to your worship, whereto six or eight families are already inclined and for which your Honor promised me a warrant authorizing us to purchase

said lands, but by reason of your Honor's daily occupations nothing came of it. So then your Honor promised to send it later but I am persuaded the daily cares of your Honor's government have driven it from your Honor's remembrance.

Truly the way is now open, the savages being inclined to abandon the land for a moderate price, the more so as trade is so slack and meagre. Hence it is the wish of our friends to dispatch the bearer of this, Philip Hendrickse Brouwer, to refresh your Honor's remembrance, for as much as it is high time, (if your Honor pleases) that the people provide themselves with hay and fodder for their beasts and like to lay out the road thither.

Please not, your Honor, distrust the people as is generally done here, by the common folks, nor doubt that one loaf will last until another be gained.

So then it will be better to provide betimes, to sieze good fortune, for afterwards it may be too late. Doubtless as your Honor is likewise a lover of agriculture, your Honor will yield to the just request of the people; the money for the purchase of the aforesaid land they themselves will furnish temporarily and until it shall be otherwise ordered by your Honor.

Finally I pray for your Honor to be pleased with the people's good intention so far as possible, and conclude by commending your Honor to God's grace with the wish for a long and happy administration, and further I remain ever

Sir

Your Honor's
most humble Servant
A. Van Curler

Rensselaerwyck
The 18th June, 1661

P.S. If your Honor falls short three or four muds[1] of oats as feed for your Honor's horses, please command me to supply your Honor with the same from my small store.

Your Honor's servant.
A. V. Curler

[1]A Dutch mud was four bushels.

Five days later the Governor and his Council took action on Van Curler's request, as follows:

June 23, 1661

> The letter of Arendt Van Curlers being presented and read on the 18th June, containing in substance a request by him and a few other persons for the large plain situated to the back of Fort Orange toward the interior for the purpose of cultivation, and consent to purchase the same from the original proprietors and make a settlement thereto, etc; which being maturely considered, the Director General [Governor] and Council resolved to consent to it; provided, that the said lands on being purchased from the native proprietors be as usual transferred to the Director General and Council aforesaid as representatives of the Lords Directory of the Priviledged West India Company; and that whatever the petitioners shall pay for the aforesaid lands to the original proprietors, shall in due time be returned to them, or be discounted to them against the tenth.

It should be explained here that all purchases of new land in the Dutch colonies required the buyer to negotiate two deeds. First he had to acquire a deed from the Indians (the "native proprietors" referred to in the record above); he then took his Indian deed to New Amsterdam (New York) and exchanged it, through the Governor, for a deed from the West India Company. Thus the Governor and his Council acted as agents for the Directors of the Company. The object of this procedure was to insure that the Indians got paid for their land, which was, of course, essential to their continued good will. Finally, the Company reimbursed the buyer for whatever amount he had paid the Indians.

Before Van Curler received the Governor's authorization to negotiate the purchase, a freshet of the Hudson flooded the colony of Beverwyck, forcing the settlers to desert their homes and flee with their cattle to higher ground. So much damage was done to the grain that it had to be cut early and used mostly for fodder. These circumstances forced postponement of the purchase for the time being. Otherwise, the colonists who hoped to settle at Schenectady would no doubt have moved there and built their dwellings during the summer of 1661.

However, in July Van Curler did complete his deal with the Indians. By means of a deed dated July 27th, the sachems of the Mohawks conveyed to him the *Groote Vlachte*, known to the Indians as *Schonowe*, which means Gateway to the West. To the deed each Indian affixed his mark, consisting of a picture of the animal after which his clan (family) was named. Thus the Indian "signatures" look like this:

dit is merck Van Cantugus
[This is the mark of the Bear Clan.]

dit is merck Van Aiadane
[This is the mark of the Turtle Clan.]

dit is merck Van Somareetsie
[This is the mark of the Wolf Clan.]

It is not known precisely what the *Groote Vlachte* comprised as mentioned in this deed, but probably only the islands and adjacent alluvial flatland on both sides of the river. Nor can it be determined just what the Indians were paid, for the Indian deed tells us only that the land was exchanged for "a certaine number of cargoes," the nature and value of which are unknown.

By the spring of 1662, the rest of the purchase procedure must have been completed, because on April 6th Van Curler wrote the Governor that he and his associates had now taken possession of the Great Flats and were "engaged in constructing houses, mills, and other buildings on this plain." Van Curler now requested the Governor to "authorize the surveyor, Jacques Cortelyou, to measure and divide the same." There was some delay, but in 1663 Governor Stuyvesant finally sent a surveyor from New Amsterdam to lay out the several house lots and farms which had been conveyed to the new owners. Thus began what was at that time the most western outpost of the New World.

It may have been lucky for Van Curler and his friends that they culminated their purchase when they did, for only two years later – in 1664 – Pieter Stuyvesant was forced to surrender New Amsterdam to a British fleet under the command of Colonel Nicolls. The surrender included not only the fort on Manhattan but "all such forts, townes, or places of strength as were now owned by the Dutch." Thus all of the Hudson-Mohawk territory came under English rule. New Amsterdam

was renamed New York after the new owner, the Duke of York, who had been granted this vast area by his brother, Charles II, ruler of England since 1660. Pieter Stuyvesant was recalled to Holland to account for his capitulation. His job was taken over by Colonel Nicolls, the first English Governor.

However, the English did little to colonize the Upper Hudson, and the settlements we are concerned with remained essentially Dutch in character for another hundred years. In general the Dutch and English colonists lived peaceably side by side. Before long, indeed, they were forced to become firm allies against their common enemies: the French and *their* allies, the Algonkian Indians.

MARKER THREE: The First Proprietors

In the southwest corner of the churchyard of the First Reformed Church, at Union and Church Streets, is a tablet which contains, along with other historical data, a list of the original owners[1] of property at the site of Schenectady:

> First Proprietors of Schenectady.
> By purchase, from Dutch West India Company.
>
> Arendt Van Curler
> Bastian De Winter
> Philip Hendrickse Brouwer
> Sander Leendertse Glen
> Symon Volckertse Veeder
> Pieter Adriaense Van Wogulum
> Tuenis Cornelisse Swart
> Marten Cornelisse Van Esselsteyn
> William Teller
> Gerrit Bancker
> Arendt Andriesse Bratt
> Pieter Jacobse Borsboom
> Pieter Danielse Van Olinda
> Jan Barentse Wemple
> Jacques Cornelisse Van Slyck

[1]William Teller and Pieter Adriaense Van Wogulum are supposed never to have resided here. Bastian De Winter signed as attorney in the name of Catalyn De Vos, widow of Arendt Andriesse Bratt.

They chose for their village an area well above the high-water level of the river freshets and, in compliance with Colonial laws, built a stockade around it. The village was divided into four equal sections by a road called Niskayuna Street (now Union) running east and west, and another called Cross Street (now Church) running north and south. Also running north and south just inside the eastern wall of the stockade was the Rondweg (now Ferry Street); parallel with it and just inside the western wall ran Handelaers (traders) Street (now Washington Avenue). Today the basic plan of the oldest part of the city remains essentially the same as it was three centuries ago.

Four separate allotments were made to each of the first settlers. Three of these consisted of: a house lot in one of the four rectangles within the stockade; a garden lot in the lowlands south and west of Mill Creek and near the Binne Kill (site of the present armory and lower Erie Boulevard); and – also outside the stockade – a farm area on the Great Flat (approximate site of the General Electric Company's main plant), on the islands.

The farm area was mostly cleared land which had been the maize fields of the Indians, perhaps for centuries. It was called *Bouwlandt* by the Dutch and was their principal inducement to settle here, for it closely resembled the *Polders* of the homeland. The *Bouwlandt* was originally divided equally among the settlers, all being served alike as to quantity, quality, and convenience. Later on, 24 acres of the farmland nearest the village were allotted to Sweer Teunise Van Velsen, who came to Schenectady in 1666. He was also granted the water privilege, both favors being in return for his agreement to build a grist mill. The largest and most valuable farm, of 114 acres, went to Arent Van Curler. It was known as the "First Piece of Land"; after his death it came to be called *Juffrow's Landt* (Widow's Land).

The fourth allotment made to each settler was an interest in land to the west of the farmlands, on both sides of the river. This area, known as *Woestina* (Wilderness), consisted of wooded hills, from which each settler had the right to cut trees for lumber and fuel. To the east of the settlement (beyond where the New York Central Railroad now runs) was an area designated as common pasture land for cattle and horses.

As the population increased and outgrew the limits of the stockade, areas were assigned on the "Albany Path" (now State Street) so that before 1690 the colony was sparsely built up as far as *Lange Gang* (now

North Broadway). Also, houses were built on the outlying farms. The south side of the river was considered the safest from Indian attacks and for that reason the Governor and Council at first discouraged settlement on the north side. This was but a temporary check, however. By 1672, all the tillable land was being farmed and it became necessary to acquire more from the Indians. Hence, an area was purchased on the 3rd of July, 1672, "Land Lying Neare the Towne of Schanhechtade Within Three Dutch Myles[1] in compass of both sides of the river westwards, which endes at Hinguariones (Towareoune) Where the Last Battel Wass between the Mohoakx and the North Indians." The price paid was "600 hands of good Wheyte Wampum[2], six koates of Duffels[3], thirty barrels of Lead and nine bagges of Powder."

The inhabitants of Beverwyck and the Colonie of Rensselaerwyck, who had their own vital interest in the fur trade, possessed sufficient influence with the Governor and the Council to induce them to issue an order that the settlers of Schenectady confine themselves exclusively to agriculture and refrain from all trade with the Indians either directly or indirectly, under the penalty of a "fine of fifty beavers; and for the third, forfeiture of their selected and acquired lands on the aforesaid Plain."

They ignored this restriction of trade in peltries, and surreptitiously carried on a profitable business in spite of the constant interference from the Dutch West India agents at Albany, who came to the frontier village searching houses, making arrests, and hauling the culprits to Albany, where fines were imposed on them. But all these measures did not prevent the contraband trade, for, being located nearer the Indians and on excellent terms of friendship, and also in many instances having intermarried with them, the Schenectady settlers continued to get the first choice of furs. The profits arising from this trade, the abundant harvests of corn and wheat yielded by the rich flats, and the proverbial industry and prudent habits of the Dutch settlers won for them a considerable degree of independence and prosperity.

The disagreement evidently persisted during the next few years, for a petition was "presented by the commonality here [Rensselaerwyck] stating that to their great regret the trade at Schaenhechtede is surreptitiously engaged in by the inhabitants there contrary to the orders issued

[1]A Dutch myle was a trifle less than four English miles.
[2]A hand of wampum was valued at four guilders or about $1.60.
[3]Duffel was a kind of cloth.

to them . . ." The Rensselaerwyck court deliberated "whether the inhabitants of Schaenhechtede should enjoy freedom of trade with the Indians or whether they shall be completely deprived thereof or whether they shall be allowed to trade with certain restrictions . . . After careful deliberations . . . the honorable [attorney] general . . . decides and adjudges that if those of Schaenhechtede obtain freedom of trade this place [Rensselaerwyck] will entirely run down."

Those traders who aimed to establish their fortunes defied all restrictions and built up a profitable trade with the Indians who passed either by boat or by trail through the forest on the way to Fort Orange. The high regard in which the Mohawks held Van Curler was a further advantage to the traders of the new village.

Again and again the restraining hand of the neighboring colony of Fort Orange fell heavily on the new traders. The settlers were continuously reminded that permission for making the settlement had been given only with the expressed prohibition of any trading with the Indians. New and stringent laws were passed in Fort Orange forbidding any Indian to enter a settler's house within the Schenectady stockade. The court minutes of early Schenectady record many violations of this law. Indians were caught in the houses repeatedly with furs in their arms. Another law imposed a severe fine on any white man who was found outside the palisade with a shovel, axe, gun or any other articles which might be bartered.

There are also numerous mentions in the court records of ordinances in both Rensselaerwyck and Schenectady against the sale of liquor to the Indians, ordinances which, it seems, were often broken. The court made an exception in the case of Antonia Van Curler. After her husband's death, as she had suffered "losse by ffire, there may be for her relefe bee so far indulged as to have license to sell some Rumme to ye Indians and also some quantity of Powder and Lead . . . from the first day of April next until the 29th day of May which shall bee in the yeare of Our Lord, 1674."

This exception was decreed by the Court of Albany, Rensselaerwyck, and Schenectady because of the widow's special need: her husband had named, as his heir, one Anneke Schaets instead of his wife.

MARKER FOUR: The "Dutchman" from Scotland

Besides Van Curler, another of the First Proprietors deserves special attention as the founder of Scotia, Schenectady's sister settlement across the Mohawk. As a matter of fact, he was probably the first white man ever to build a home in the Schenectady area. A marker in Scotia, at the intersection of Mohawk and Sanders Avenues, commemorates this event:

> GLENN-SANDERS HOUSE 1713
> Built by Capt. Johannes Glen partly of Materials in First Mohawk Valley House Built by Alexander Glen, 1655.

This "Dutchman," listed among the Proprietors as Sander Leenderste Glen, was in reality a Scot born Alexander Lindsey. He is known to have put up a house on this site as early as 1658, fully four years before Van Curler and the others moved from Beverwyck to the *Groote Vlachte*. As the marker indicates, Lindsey may even have had some sort of rude shelter on the bank of the river still earlier, perhaps in 1655. Thus Scotia, which is the Latin word for Scotland, Lindsey's homeland, is actually older than Schenectady: in another sense it is much younger, because it was not incorporated as a village until 1904.

Alexander Lindsey was born in 1610 in Inverness, a portion of Scotland known as The Glen. During a time of religious persecution he fled to the Netherlands, where he lived in harmony with the Dutch people. After 14 years there he migrated to Long Island, then to the Mohawk Valley, where he joined forces with Van Curler and his associates as one of the original Proprietors of Schenectady, among whom he was the only Scot. He and his wife, Catalyn Doncassen (Donckesz in Dutch), have another singular distinction: theirs is the only burial place of the original Proprietors which is known to posterity.

They are now buried in the Sanders' private cemetery, but originally they were interred just in front of the pulpit of the original Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in Schenectady, she in 1685 and he a year later. "This old settler," to quote Judge John Sanders' Centennial Address, "as a matter of religion and economy, in 1682, built in the only public square in Schenectady, at the junction of Church, State, and Water Streets and Mill Lane, a frame building of respectable dimensions

at his individual expense and presented the same to the inhabitants of the settlement as a free gift to be used for the purposes of a church and a town hall." Later the church was relocated at the intersection of what are now Church and Union Streets. When the site of the original church was excavated in 1849, John Sanders had the bodies of Alexander Lindsey and his wife exhumed and reinterred in Scotia.

As a Proprietor, Alexander Lindsey owned land in Schenectady as well as Scotia. Pearson's *History of the Schenectady Patent* states that Lindsey's village lot (in Schenectady) was on the west side of Washington Avenue. He also owned a pasture on the north side of Front Street.

According to Pearson, the patent for the Scotia farm, "Nova Scotia," was dated November 3, 1665. Lindsey-Glen's decision to build where he did was probably influenced by two factors. It was the spot where the Indians crossed the river on their way to sell their valuable pelts in Schenectady, or as often in Albany, and to which they returned on their way north and west. Also, the land was especially fertile along the bend of the river and had therefore long been cultivated by the Indians. However, the property was frequently flooded in the spring; so when in 1713 Captain Johannes Glen, son of the Proprietor, built the present dwelling, it was atop the bluff above the original spot. In this home the stair-rail and various doors and timbers from the original house were used. The walls are two feet thick. The shutters on the first floor are on the outside and those on the second floor are on the inside, so the residents could close off the first floor and shoot from the second. The room for smoking meat was in the attic, and on rainy days the house still has a faint aroma of smokehouse fire and hams. At the time of this writing, the ninth generation of the First Proprietor's family is living in the Glen-Sanders mansion.

The name of Johannes Glen figured prominently in accounts of the Massacre of 1690. Captain Glen had repeatedly warned the villagers across the river of the necessity of keeping their stockade closed and guarded. However, there were political differences between him and the Schenectadians, and they ignored his advice. The day after the massacre, Glen, having prepared to defend his family in their home, learned to his surprise that the invaders had orders to spare him and his relatives because of his previous kindnesses to certain Frenchmen and Indians. Glen took full advantage of this special dispensation, naming so

many of the Schenectady survivors as his relatives that the Indians finally became suspicious and called a halt to his exorbitant claims.

His house is now referred to as the Glen-Sanders mansion because Johannes Glen's granddaughter, Deborah, married Johannes Sanders of Albany, great-grandson of the interpreter who came over with Alexander Lindsey; through his wife's inheritance and through purchase from other heirs, Sanders became owner of the entire Glen estate by 1765.

MARKER FIVE: The Death of Van Curler

A tablet recognizing Van Curler as the founder of Schenectady is located at the northwest corner of Union and Church Streets:

To Honor the Memory
of
ARENDT VAN CURLER
Acknowledged leader of the
Fifteen original settlers of Schenectady.
Born at Nijkerk, Holland, 1620;
Came to New Amsterdam, 1638; To Schenectady, 1662;
Resided Here Until Death.
Home lot, southeast quarter of this block.
Cousin of Patroon Kilian Van Rensselaer;
Often consulted by Governor Nicolls;
Highly respected by the Governors of Canada,
And rescued many Christians from hands of Mohawks.
He was an adventurous, enterprising leader
Among the pioneers of the western world,
Who with wisdom, justice and humanity
Administered the Affairs of an important colony,
And as embassador to the Indians
Cemented relations of friendship,
And shaped the wilderness of New Netherlands
For uses of advancing civilization.
Drowned in Lake Champlain July 1667,
While on his way to visit DeTracy, Viceroy of Canada,
Upon his invitation.

This marker stands on the house lot which was allocated to Van Curler when the community was first surveyed. It is not known whether

Arent, who was an extremely busy man throughout the few years left to him after the settling, ever found time to build a home on his lot. After his death, his wife was issued permission to live in the village, just where is not known. But inasmuch as she was allowed to sell liquor, she perhaps resided on his farm plot outside the stockade.

The circumstances of the journey during which Van Curler lost his life seem quite in keeping with the man's character. For, as had been true so often before, his mission was that of a peacemaker. On April 30, 1667, the following invitation had been extended to him by M. De Tracy, Governor of Canada, written from Quebec:

> If you find it agreeable to come hither this summer, as you have caused me to hope, you will be most welcome and entertained to the utmost of my ability as I have great esteem for you, though I have not a personal acquaintance with you.
> Believe this truth and that I am Sir, your affectionate and assured servant.

The invitation had evidently been sought by Van Curler, not merely because he was a naturally curious man, fond of exploring new country and meeting new faces, but because of the chance it offered to do something toward improving relations between the Canadian-French and the Dutch-English colonials. In fact, had the meeting between him and De Tracy taken place, it might easily have affected the history of the New York colonies, at least temporarily, because Van Curler was respected and trusted by the Indians, the Dutch, and the English alike. Apparently Governor Nicolls had considerable faith in Arent's abilities as a diplomat, for the Governor furnished him with an official "passport" and letter of introduction to De Tracy:

> Mons. Curler has been importuned by divers of his friends at Quebec to give them a visit, and ambitious to kiss your hands, he hath entreated my passe and liberty to conduct and accompany a young gentleman, M. Fontaine, who unfortunately fell into the barbarous hands of his enemies, and by means of Mons. Curler, obtained his liberty.

So, in early July Van Curler started out from Schenectady to travel overland to Canada. After several days on the trail, at a little before

sundown, he and his companions started across Lake Champlain in canoes. Arent, two other Dutchmen, an Indian, and the latter's squaw and child rode in one canoe; in a second canoe were two more Dutchmen and another Indian, perhaps a guide. When they had gone some distance out into the lake, an evening wind came up. The waves began to swamp Van Curler's canoe. The squaw and the Indian stripped for swimming. The former advised Van Curler to throw all his goods overboard, in order to lighten the canoe, but he refused. Slowly but surely the canoe filled with water and finally capsized. Being swimmers, the Indian and his squaw managed to cling to the canoe, though their child drowned. The Indian later testified that he tried three times to help Van Curler, who could not swim, back to the support of the canoe, but the waves were too high. Both Van Curler and the other Dutchmen in his canoe drowned. The second canoe had turned about and reached the shore safely. The Indian and his squaw finally managed to get ashore late that night and rejoined the rest of the survivors. The exact date of these events is unknown.

The news of the tragedy reached Schenectady very quickly. A committee was appointed to investigate the accident. The above account of the details emerged from the survivors' testimony, which is on record. Governor Nicolls, when he learned of the drowning, wrote the magistrates of Albany to express his concern and sorrow; clearly, Van Curler had been one of the Governor's trusted friends.

The Mohawks were as grief-stricken as the Dutch and English, for they doubted that they could ever again find as faithful and honest a friend as Van Curler had been. While the testimony was being heard in Schenectady, some Mohawk leaders were present and expressed serious concern over how this loss would affect their future relations with the white colonists. A formal statement of the Mohawks' feelings on this matter has been handed down:

> Anno 1667, this 28th July/7th August.
> Proposition made by the Mohawks, after Corlaer's death, at Schanechtade, in the house of Arent Van Curler, in the presence of Jacques Cornelisz, Sander Leendertsz, Theunis Cornelisz, Jan Van Eps and Cornelis Cornelisz. First, they bewail his death, saying that they are sorry that he, who so long resided in this country, and ruled in this region, should have perished thus.

Secondly, they say there will doubtless come another Chief, but they expect that he will not rule so well. Therefore we request that you appoint a good ruler over us. We shall govern ourselves accordingly. Thereupon they gave 24 hands of sewan, 12 on the first statement and 12 on the second.

Anno 1667, 28th July/7th August.
Answer made to their request.
To the first, we said that he was not a man whom we could easily replace. Also, the sorrow was so great that for the present, we could hardly speak of it. Let sadness reign in our hearts. Even if we (wished to) appoint another ruler at once, we could not do so, because he was such a wise man.
Should we then, in this sadness, immediately appoint another ruler? Therefore we shall wait until sorrow has been lifted from our hearts, otherwise if we immediately appointed another ruler it would seem as if we were glad. Let his place remain vacant, for half a year or a whole year as a token of mourning.
Answer made according to our knowledge with which they were satisfied.

Jacques Cornelisz Cornelis Cornelissen.

The Schenectady tablet in Van Curler's honor was unveiled in 1909. At the same time, the Schenectady County Historical Society also placed a memorial tablet in the church in which Van Curler was baptized in Nijkerk, Holland. It reads:

LAUS : DEO

In • grateful • memory • of
* 1620 — ARENDT : VAN : CURLER — 1667 *
Commissary • of • Rensselaerwijk
Maker • of • the • covenant • of • peace • with • the Iroquois
Founder • of • the • City • of • Schenectady, N. Y.
Erected • by • the • Schenectady • County Historical • Society • A.D. 1909

MARKERS SIX AND SEVEN:
Last Indian Battle Near Schenectady

A marker on the Schenectady-Amsterdam Highway (New York State Route 5), about one-half mile north of Hoffmans, commemorates a major Indian battle in the Schenectady area:

> LAST BATTLE
> Between the Mohawks and the Mohicans
> Took Place Nearby in the
> Vale of the Chaughtanoodo Brook
> 1669

A second marker, on the Wolf Hollow Road about 10 miles west of Schenectady on Route 5, refers to the same battle:

> WOLF HOLLOW
> A fault and Displacement of 1000 feet in earth's Surface Rocks. Here, in 1669, the Mohawks Ambushed their Algonkian Invaders.

At first glance, the markers may seem to disagree. But if one looks briefly into 17th-century Indian politics, the contradiction disappears. When the white men first came to North America, the Indians of the Northeast were divided into two great groups: the Algonkians and the Iroquois. Each group consisted of a number of more or less independent tribes or "villages." Among the chief Algonkian tribes in the New England-New York area were the Pequots, the Wampanoags, the Narragansets, the Massachusetts, and the Mohicans. Many Mohicans still inhabited the Hudson Valley when the first Dutch settlers arrived. The Iroquois tribes, most of whom lived in New York State, were the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Cayugas, the Senecas, and the Onondagas. Collectively, the Iroquois were known as the Five Nations, or "People of the Long House," because they had managed to achieve a loose confederacy. (In 1712 the Iroquois also admitted the Tuscaroras, thus becoming the Six Nations.)

At the time Schenectady was settled, these two Indian groups had been more or less continuously at war for many decades. Especially active in this feud were the Mohawks, who were the most ferocious of the Iroquois, and the Massachusetts and Mohican tribes of the Algonkians. Among other bones of contention was the fact that the Mohawks had driven the Mohicans from the Mohawk River Valley about 1600.

When the French and Dutch arrived, the Indians naturally welcomed the chance to trade with them for firearms. The new weapons enabled the Iroquois, in particular, greatly to strengthen their position and ultimately to gain absolute supremacy over their Indian enemies. The Iroquois were, of course, aided by the decimation of the New England Algonkians by the British.

But for three-quarters of a century – from about 1625 to 1700 – the two groups were involved in almost uninterrupted warfare. The Iroquois made constant inroads upon various Algonkian tribes to the east, and the Algonkians naturally made retaliatory raids. It was during one of these that the battle referred to in our markers was fought.

The attacking Algonkian party was made up largely of Massachusetts Indians, the most numerous and powerful of the New England tribes. Their objective was to raid some of the Mohawk villages on the river of the same name. They crossed the Hudson at the mouth of the Hoosic River and took an ancient cross-country trail to the Mohawk Valley. Very likely they gathered a number of recruits along the way, especially from among the Mohicans, whose long-standing grudge against the Mohawks had by now been reinforced by their pledge to side with the French against all of the Iroquois.

The Algonkians reached the Mohawk at the foot of the Kinquariones, now locally called Touareuna Hill. Here they probably rested before advancing up the river to the first Mohawk village, the "Castle" of Gandawague. This palisaded village was on Cayadutta Creek near the present village of Fonda. The move from the Kinquariones was probably made during the night, for the raiders attacked the Castle at daybreak on August 18, 1669.

Unsuccessful in their first assault, the invaders lay siege to the Castle. But after several days, their ammunition nearly gone, they abandoned

the siege and started back down the valley, evidently meaning to return home. Meanwhile, however, the Mohawks had sent runners to ask for help from their other two villages on the south side of the river. Apparently the invaders did not suspect this, for they retreated only as far as the Kinquariones and, turning into the little valley of Chaughtanooda Creek, encamped for the night; or perhaps they thought that being homeward bound they would not be pursued in any case.

But not so. The Mohawks well knew the route their enemy would follow from Gandawague. Swiftly and silently they glided down the river in canoes and moved along its northern bank on foot. At the Kinquariones, under the direction of their greatest chief, Kryn, they divided into two parties. One party made a wide detour to the northern entrance of the fault or ravine referred to by the marker, and waited in ambush; the other party climbed the western side of the rocks and descended upon the invaders' camp from the south. Thus the Algonkians were unknowingly trapped in the ravine, for the precipitous sides prevented their escape to east or west.

Early in the morning the retreating raiders started up the narrow ravine. Near the northern end they encountered the first party of waiting Mohawks. A few Algonkians fell here, but most of them turned back and started down the ravine. Shortly they confronted the rest of the Mohawks and, hemmed in on all sides, were forced to fight. Neither side had much ammunition left, so the battle soon became a desperate hand-to-hand struggle which lasted until nightfall. Some historians regard this fight as the greatest (of which there is authentic record) ever fought between the eastern tribes.

Very likely the battle would have been resumed as soon as daylight permitted, but during the night the surviving Algonkians eluded the Mohawk guards — if there were any — and escaped down the trail to the Hudson. There is no record of any pursuit; probably the Mohawks were too busy scalping the slain, tomahawking the wounded, and burying their own dead.

The Algonkians lost about 50 of their best warriors, but their most severe blow was the death of their chief, Josiah. Having succeeded in killing him, the Mohawks adjudged themselves the victors. By the same

token, their own chief, Kryn, found his reputation greatly enhanced and his influence among the Mohawks stronger than ever.

The hill where the battle was fought marks the western limit of the second area purchased by the Schenectady colonists from the Indians. The deed of July 3, 1672, refers to the place as "Hinguariones (Towareoune). Where the Last Battell Wass between the Mohakx and the North Indians." Although the fight had taken place only a dozen miles from Schenectady, the Dutch knew nothing about it. However, an account of both the siege and the subsequent battle does survive in a manuscript owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society. In this account, a Major Gookin describes the planning of the expedition and its disastrous ending. Also, a full account of the siege appears in the *Jesuit Relations* by Father Pierron, who happened to be present at Gandawague during the assault and who, on the day after the fight, visited the ravine at the Kinquariones.

THE TIME OF THE MASSACRE

MASSACRE AND BURNING OF SCHENECTADY, FEBRUARY 8, 1690

From a painting by Sexton,
Original in The Schenectady County Historical Society

MARKERS RECALLING THE TIME OF THE MASSACRE

1690

MARKERS EIGHT TO ELEVEN: The First Stockade

We are drawing close to an event which is by far the most dramatic in all of Schenectady's long history. But first we should remind ourselves of the physical layout of the settlement in 1690.

Though Van Curler and his fellow-founders anticipated no trouble with their friendly business partners, the Mohawks, they were obliged by colonial law to build a stockade around their village. It was to consist of pointed posts firmly planted in the ground and bound together at the top. In recent years serious doubts have been raised as to what this first stockade actually looked like. However, the traditional notion of its shape and location is recorded in a set of four markers.

> Southwest Corner of Stockade
> was twenty-eight feet south, from a point one hundred feet west, of this tablet.
>
> A blockhouse or fort, containing the Royal Flagstaff, stood in this angle of stockade, and was burned on night of massacre, February 8-9, 1690.
>
> Seven persons were then killed, and six taken prisoners, near the corner of these streets.

The stockade extended to a second marker, located on a building on the southeast corner of State and Ferry Streets, which reads:

> South Gate of Stockade
> located at the centre of present State Street in east line of stockade which extended north through a point nine feet west of northeast corner of present State and Ferry Streets.
>
> Watch-house was located southwest of and near gate.
>
> Assault during massacre of Feb. 8-9, 1690 made outside of Gate where on the north side of State Street nine persons were killed and two taken prisoners.

From here the stockade followed North Ferry Street to a point in St. George's Churchyard. The tablet there reads:

> Northeast Corner of Stockade
> is marked by this tablet. A blockhouse, with garrison and cannon, stood in this angle of stockade, facing the ferry at foot of this street. North line of stockade extended from the tablet direct to the river bank near intersection of Front Street and Washington Avenue.

The fourth corner is designated by a tablet at Washington Avenue and Front Street, which reads:

> Northwest Corner of Stockade
> was one hundred feet west by north of this tablet. On the night of the massacre, Feb. 8-9, 1690 the Blockhouse standing in this angle of stockade was burned.
>
> 24 soldiers constituted the garrison, six of whom were taken prisoners.
>
> 18 were scattered through the village during the massacre.

Within the stockade were a number of houses (estimated at from 40 to 80) and other buildings, including a church, as well as the fortified structures mentioned on the markers. As for the stockade itself, one friendly Mohawk chief stated, after the massacre, that "ye town is not well fortifyed ye stockades are so short ye Indians can jump over them like a dogg."

It would seem, then, that the village's protection against possible enemies may have been somewhat less formidable than the markers suggest. But even so, ordinary precautions would probably have enabled the settlers to hold off an attacking force until help could arrive from Albany.

MARKER TWELVE: The Massacre of 1690

The North Gate of the stockade, which led to the pasture area and to the road to Albany via Niskayuna, stood at the intersection of Church and Front Streets. A tablet there refers to both the Massacre of 1690 and to the much later Battle of Beukendaal. The first part reads as follows:

COMMEMORATING MASSACRE OF
FEB. 8-9, 1690

one hundred and fourteen French and ninety-six Indians entered during night at North Gate, located at this point.

Assault was commenced here. Seventy houses were burned, sixty persons killed and twenty-seven made prisoners.

Outside this gate, two were killed and two were made prisoners. Just inside, two were made prisoners. Here Adam Vrooman resisted attack and his wife and child were killed.

This tragedy might well have spelled the doom of a less hardy settlement than Schenectady. The massacre ties Schenectady's history to a number of events of far-reaching origin and significance.

For this attack on the village by 114 Frenchmen and 96 Indians under the command of two French lieutenants was no mere raid to murder and plunder, but the culmination of several social and political forces which had long been gathering strength. From the French point of view, the attack was part of a large-scale effort to destroy the English and Dutch colonies in the northeast and ultimately to win the whole North American continent for France. This campaign, in turn, was a New World offshoot of a far greater struggle being waged in Europe between England and France.

From the Indians' point of view, the attack was, if possible, even more complex in its origins. Behind it lay a long-standing feud between the powerful Algonkian Indian Group (who lived on both sides of the Saint Lawrence and generally east of Lakes Champlain and George and the Hudson River) and the equally powerful Iroquois Group (living mostly in what is now New York State).

The Algonkians and the Iroquois had been enemies for many decades. Furthermore, there was a second feud between two factions of the Iroquois themselves. Most of the Iroquois were friendly to both the Dutch and the English settlers during the early years; and this was especially true of the Mohawks and the Dutch of Schenectady. However, the very active Jesuit missionaries from French Canada had managed to convert to Catholicism a large number of northern Iroquois, especially Mohawks, from a few upstate villages, and Senecas, the "Keepers of the Western Gate." Many of these converts, including the

eminent chief Kryn (who had led the victors in the Indian battle near Schenectady in 1669), had been persuaded to leave their home near Fonda and settle on an island in the Saint Lawrence opposite Montreal.

Therefore, when Count Frontenac was made Governor of Canada by King Louis XIV of France in 1689, he found ready allies among these "praying Indians," as their non-Christian compatriots called them. Frontenac organized three separate expeditions to penetrate and ravage the Dutch-English colonies at as many different points. It was during one of these incursions that Schenectady was attacked.

In mid-January, 1690, a French-and-Indian force totaling 210 started south from Montreal to pillage the nearest English settlements. They strode on snowshoes over the vast white field of the frozen St. Lawrence, carrying guns and hatchets and dragging their provisions and blankets on sleds. After advancing for four or five days up another frozen river (the Richelieu) and over the ice of Lake Champlain, they stopped near what is now Fort Edward to hold a council. Frontenac had left the precise point of attack to the discretion of his lieutenants. The officers selected Albany as the objective and the invasion force resumed its march. After several days they reached a point (Schuylerville) where the trail split, one branch leading to Schenectady and the other to Albany.

During this march, Kryn, the natural leader of the Indian segment of the force, had been arguing persuasively for an assault on Schenectady rather than Albany. Among other motives, he apparently wanted to settle some long-standing scores with the main body of the Mohawks, whom the French had wooed him away from, and with their close friends, the Schenectady Dutch. Whatever his exact purposes, his arguments carried the day, for they chose the path leading to the Mohawk Valley. One persuasive point may have been the fact that Albany, unlike Schenectady, was defended by cannon, which the Indians held in mortal fear.

Meanwhile, the Schenectady settlement was ill-prepared for any attack. There was political confusion throughout the New York Colony as a result of the abdication of James II of England and the recent appointment by the British government of a new Protestant governor in New York, one Jacob Leisler. Not all the colonists accepted this administrative change-over, and Schenectady was seriously divided on it. For instance, Captain Sander Glen, commandant of the settlement, his

brother Johannes, and several other wealthy citizens would not accept Leisler's authority. However, many of the people in the village did, and they therefore ignored Glen's repeated admonitions to keep sentinels posted and the gates of the stockade closed. Similarly, the military force stationed in the fort, consisting of some militia from Connecticut under the command of Lieutenant Enos Talmadge, were also under popular ban for being pro-Leisler, and their orders were disregarded. The severe winter weather was no doubt another reason why the apathetic villagers ignored the possibility of attack from the north and so failed to take even ordinary precautions; they could not believe that an enemy force from Canada could march a couple of hundred miles through the deep snow, bearing enough provisions on their backs or dragging them on sleds.

And yet, ironically, the village had been forewarned. Friendly Mohawks had earlier captured a band of "praying Indians" and learned from them of Frontenac's plan. At this time Glen and others had appealed to Albany, Boston, and finally Hartford for protection. Only Hartford had complied, but two-thirds of the 87 men sent from Connecticut, under the command of Captain Jonathan Bull, had been kept at Albany. Only Lieutenant Talmadge's small force was therefore on hand the night of the massacre, and it was unable to command the obedience of the villagers. As a result of all these circumstances, when the Canadian force reached Schenectady, they found the gates of the stockade open and, according to tradition, guarded only by two snowmen.

But to get back to the advancing French-Indian force: as they headed for the Mohawk, a thaw set in and they had to wade knee-deep through snow and slush. It must have been an exhausting march, for it took nine days to travel from Schuylerville to Schenectady, which was only 37 miles by their route. By late afternoon of February 8th, they were still two leagues (six miles) from their goal. And now a howling blizzard swept down from the northwest. The men were exhausted, hungry, and half-frozen. But Kryn harangued them and exhorted them to keep going, the sooner to wash out their wrongs in blood. They advanced again and in the evening reached the river a little below the village. The

plan had been to postpone the attack until 2 A.M.; but an advance scouting party had returned and reported that they "had seen no-one." Rather than wait any longer in the extreme cold and biting wind, the invaders therefore decided to attack at once.

Stealthily they crossed the frozen river. They then divided into two companies; one was to enter the village by a gate in the northern side of the stockade (near Church Street), the other by a gate in the south-east corner (near Ferry and State). The latter company failed to find its gate in the dark and snow, so both parties entered by the North Gate. Now one company turned to the right, the other to the left, and filed around the village between the palisade and the houses until the leaders met at the southern end, thus forming a complete cordon. A hideous war whoop sounded; doors were broken down with hatchets. The settlers leapt from their beds only to fall before the tomahawks. Women seized their children and ran into the streets where they were shot down by French and Indians alike. Death met them on every side; the snow was crimsoned with their blood; the streets were strewn with the dead and dying.

The flames of nearly 80[1] dwellings illuminated the winter sky, and in the lurid light the Indians, with strings of bleeding scalps hanging at their sides, danced in frantic joy. Few who failed to escape were spared. "No pen can write, and no tongue express," wrote Pieter Schuyler, Mayor of Albany, in a letter to Governor Bradstreet of Massachusetts, "the cruelties committed at said place, ye women bigg with childe rip'd up and ye children alive throwne into ye flames and those Dash'd in Pieces against the Doors and windows."

There was little resistance except at the blockhouse near the present corner of Front Street and Washington Avenue, where Lt. Talmadge and his few soldiers were stationed. The doors of the blockhouse were forced and all but three of the militiamen were killed. The three were taken prisoner.

The desperate fight put up by Adam Vrooman and his family comes down to us by tradition. His house stood at the west corner of Front and Church Streets, opposite the North Gate. Being well supplied with ammunition and confident in the strength of his building, which was a sort of fort, he resolved to defend himself to the last, and, if he were

[1]Although most documented accounts give the number as 80, Charlevoix, the Jesuit historian of Canada, calls it 40. This is perhaps nearer the truth.

fated to perish in the flames of his own home, to sell his and his children's lives as dearly as possible. His house was set afire and soon filled with smoke. His wife cautiously but imprudently opened the upper half of the Dutch door slightly. An alert Indian noticed the opening and fired through it, and killed Mrs. Vrooman. Their daughter ran out a side door with her infant sister in her arms. She managed to escape, but the baby was torn from her grasp and its life dashed out against the side of the building. Adam's brisk gunfire finally resulted in a parley with the enemy. Though his life and property were spared, his son Barent and a Negro slave were carried into captivity.

Orders were given to spare Peter Tessemacker, the Dutch domine or minister, from whom the attackers hoped to get valuable information; but during the holocaust he was killed, and his house and church were probably burned.

In all, 60 people were killed outright, of whom 38 were men and boys, 10 were women, and 12 children. Some, more agile or merely luckier than the rest, escaped and fled through the storm to shelter with families outside the village. However, 25 of these fugitives lost limbs through the severity of the cold. The utter helplessness of the villagers to put up any resistance is shown by the fact that only two of the enemy were killed and only one was even badly wounded. All but a few buildings – probably not more than five – were burned to the ground. Of Schenectady as it stood prior to the massacre, no buildings remain in their original form.

Early Sunday morning, as the shadow of the awful calamity lay like a pall over the beautiful snow-clad valley, one of the French officers, with Kryn and others, crossed the river to Scotia. Here they found Johannes Glen and his family and servants prepared to defend his barricaded homestead. They told him they had orders to leave him undisturbed because he had always been kind to French prisoners who had been captured by Mohawks. They urged Glen to accompany them to the ruined village, leaving one of their number as hostage for his safe return. He was informed that any of his kindred who were now prisoners would be released. This privilege Glen exercised so freely that the Canadian Indians finally objected, on the grounds that he could not possibly have so many relatives. He did, however, persuade the French not to take any of the women prisoners to Canada, arguing that they would be a hindrance or, more likely, die on the journey anyway.

By early Sunday afternoon the invaders had begun a swift retreat to the north, taking with them 27 prisoners and all of the horses in the village, packed with plunder.

On Monday morning the court at Albany met and directed that "Captain Jonathan Bull be sent with five men out of each company to Skinnechtady to bury ye dead there and if ye Indians [that is, friendly Mohawks] be come downe to join with them and pursue ye enemy."

Apparently many of the victims were buried in a trench just outside the ruins of the North Gate, for a number of skeletons were found there when cellars were being dug in 1886 and 1887. These remains were reinterred nearby. Again, excavations being made in 1902 near the corner of Church and Front Streets revealed eight more skeletons. As these locations have never been regular burial grounds, the skeletons were undoubtedly those of victims of the massacre.

By Wednesday the 12th, news of the calamity had reached the Mohawk towns. Their warriors, armed with guns and tomahawks, swarmed down the valley on snowshoes, ready to pursue the enemy. One would have thought the invaders could not possibly be overtaken, since they had so long a start; and apparently the Canadians decided that all pursuit had been abandoned for, having killed and eaten most of their horses, they slowed up as they neared home. But a few of the Mohawks who had followed staunchly on their tracks fell upon a party of stragglers almost within sight of Montreal, killing or capturing 15 or more.

It has been said that the shots fired at Lexington and Concord were heard "round the world"; but the blood spilled in the Schenectady raid and in the other two blows struck by Frontenac (at Salmon Falls, New Hampshire, and at Portland, Maine) did more than any other one thing to show the colonies the need for union – for common protection. On May 1st, 1690 – less than three months after the massacre – a meeting was convened in New York City to plan concerted measures against the Canadian threat. This was the first of a series of unified actions which finally culminated in the great Continental Congress. More directly, the May meeting resulted in an abortive expedition against Frontenac which left the Massachusetts Colony so deeply in debt that it was forced to

issue paper money. Thus the burning of Schenectady caused the first use of paper currency in America.

While the first congress in New York was instilling new spirit in all of the English-Dutch Colonies, the settlers of Schenectady were also being encouraged by their Mohawk neighbors. Some of the chiefs met with the survivors and promised them both aid and protection if they would reestablish the village. One chief expressed the sentiments of all in these words:

"BRETHERN: – Wee are sory and Extreamly grieved for ye murther lately Committed by ye French upon our Brethren of Shinnectady wee Esteem this evill as if done to ourselfs being all in one Covenant Chain,

"Wee Lament and Condole the death of so many of our brethren so basely murthered at Shinnectady, we cannot accompt it a great victory for itt is done byy-way of Deciet.

"BRETHERN: – Doe not be discouraged this is butt a beginning of ye Warr. We are strong enough, the whole house have there Eyes upon yrs and they only stay your motion and will bee ready to doe wathever shall be resolved upon by our Brethren.

"Wee Recommen ye brethren to keep good watch and if any Enemies come take care y' messengers be more speddily sent to us than lately was done we would not advise ye brethern quite to desert Shinnectady but to make a fort there. The Enemy would be too glorious to see it quite desolate and ye town is not well fortifyed ye stockades are so short ye Indians can jump over them like a dogg."

When a fort was later authorized, the Mohawks helped build it and the stockade was made Indian-fashion of small tree trunks interlaced with branches. The settlers were courageous men, and soon a new and larger village arose, phoenixlike, out of the ashes of the old.

In the course of time, the population grew, the stockaded area was enlarged, and more gates were constructed, especially along the west

line, to facilitate trading with the Indians coming down the river in canoes with their pelts.

MARKER THIRTEEN: The Ride of Symon Schermerhorn

Near the corner of North Church and Front Streets is a tablet which commemorates a journey on horseback which was at least as heroic, if not as indispensable, as the far more famous midnight ride of Paul Revere:

> Ride of Symon Schermerhoorn
> On night of Feb. 8, 1690
> Although Wounded he rode
> 20 miles to Albany Warning
> Settlers.

Paul Revere's April gallop along a Massachusetts road to warn the minutemen that the British were about to capture the military supplies which the colonials had stored at Concord has been immortalized by poet and historian. Few Americans have ever heard of a Schenectady man's ride on a similar mission; and yet Symon Schermerhorn's trip the night of February 8, 1690, must have required far more daring and endurance.

At the onset of the massacre, Schermerhorn's son and three of his slaves were killed. Yet Symon somehow managed to mount a horse and, fighting his way through the savages, escape through the North Gate. By now he was seriously wounded in the hip and his horse was also injured. But he still chose the longer way to Fort Orange (Albany) because he wanted to warn the settlers along the River Road (close to the Mohawk and Hudson) of the danger to them. This meant nearly 20 miles of battling with the midnight blizzard and trying to ignore his own suffering. The ride took him six hours. When he finally reached the northern gate of the Albany fort, his horse fell dead from exhaustion, and Symon himself was only half alive.

So overwhelming had been the attack on Schenectady that Schermerhorn had naturally assumed that the French-and-Indian force was a

very large one and that their next targets would be Albany and the intervening settlements. Furthermore, there had been rumors that such a force from the north might join up with another and even larger force near Kingston and that the whole invasion army would then proceed downriver in an attempt to capture New Amsterdam (New York).

In terms of the personal heroism required, Schermerhorn's ride makes Paul Revere's seem like a pleasant jaunt in the warm spring moonlight. But in terms of history, Revere's ride, of course, not only proved vitally important, but swiftly acquired symbolic meaning, whereas Symon's, though he could never have guessed it at the time, turned out to be quite unnecessary.

MARKER FOURTEEN: The First Mill

One of the victims of the massacre of 1690 was Sweer Teunise Van Velsen, who came to the colony in 1666 and built a gristmill just outside the stockade. Today on Mill Lane, which is a narrow cobblestone street running east from the intersection of State, Water, and South Church Streets and ending on South Ferry Street one block below State Street, this marker is affixed to the wall of a building midway of the Lane:

SITE OF FIRST MILL
Built by Sweer Teunise on Mill Kill 1666. Destroyed by Flood 1673 & rebuilt. First industry of the Mohawk Valley

Van Velsen's mill was on a creek originally known as the Sand Kill, a tributary to Coehorn Creek. Water from the small millpond fed the wheel. After the flood of 1673 destroyed the first mill, Van Velsen rebuilt it and, in consideration of his loss, he was allowed to take as his "toll" (payment for the grinding) an eighth instead of the usual tenth of the corn which he ground. The second mill was destroyed at the time of the massacre.

As the years passed, many mills for sawing lumber and grinding corn and wheat were constructed, for Schenectady was the center to which not only local farmers, but also those from as far away as the Schoharie Valley, brought their grain to be ground.

THE TIME OF REBUILDING AND GROWTH

INDIAN MONUMENT AT SITE OF OLD FORT
Located at intersection of Front, Ferry and Green Sts.

MARKERS RECALLING THE TIME OF REBUILDING AND GROWTH 1690 to 1744

MARKERS FIFTEEN TO SEVENTEEN: New Defenses After the Massacre

In a small park at the intersection of Front, Green, and Ferry Streets stands a monument which reads:

> QUEEN'S NEW FORT
> Built 1705
> Demolished during the Revolutionary War.
> This Memorial Statue Erected
> 12th September, 1887

A nearby tablet supplies further details:

> Site of "Queen's Fort."
> Built in 1705, as a triple stockade.
> Rebuilt in 1735, of heavy hewn timbers
> Set on stone wall ten feet high.
> Fort was one hundred feet square,
> With blockhouse in each corner,
> twenty-four feet square and twenty feet high.
> Was capable of holding three hundred men.
> Entered by a large swinging gate, raised like a drawbridge
> Six cannon commanded the approaches from all sides
> Open square within was used as a Parade and drill ground.
> Taken down during Revolutionary War
> And timbers used in frame of Soldiers barrack,
> at corner of Union and Lafayette Streets.

It is obvious that the colonists at Schenectady had not forgotten the Massacre of 1690. However, Queen's New Fort was merely the latest of a series of attempts to protect the settlement from possible enemies.

Unfortunately, no marker commemorates the rebuilding of the original stockade, which took place, under the Governor's orders, immediately after the Great Massacre. This second stockade served the community between 1690 and 1705.

There are, however, a drawing (see illustration elsewhere) and a description of it by the Rev. John Miller, Chaplain of the British forces stationed in New York. He visited the upriver posts in 1695 and reported that Schenectady had a "triple stockade, a new blockhouse at every angle and in each blockhouse two great guns. It also contained 28 huts for inhabitants of the village, two wigwams for Indians, a large barn, and styes for hogs." The Chaplain's drawing was made a number of years after he had gone back to England and there is some question as to the correctness of the location and compass directions which his map assigns to the second stockade.

Schenectady was always fearful of attacks by Indians – not by the Mohawks because there was a warm friendship between them and the Dutch, but by the Canadians to the north and the Mohican Indians to the east. This enmity was brought about by three factors. Whenever England and France were at war, the differences were carried into the colonies and the Indians attached to the French regime were induced by the offer of a high bounty on scalps to attack the English settlements. A second factor was the religious differences between the French and the English missionaries working among the Indians. Third was the fact that the English claimed the territory of the Six Nations as part of the Province of New York, but the French denounced the English authority. Thus, warfare was inevitable and more or less continuous.

During the summer of 1693 there appeared to be a lull in the warfare, although skulking parties of French and Indians were constantly attacking outlying families and carrying away prisoners. In July, 1695, the Oneida Castle was attacked and burned, causing great consternation in Schenectady for fear the French would next move down and attack that village. This fear was further heightened by the report of a French prisoner that the French had 500 pairs of snowshoes ready to use when the first of the winter snows came. When it did come in January, the entire garrison at Schenectady, consisting of 16 men, deserted at midnight. The commandant pursued them and, after a fight in which several were killed or wounded, brought back some of the wounded. They were court-martialed and condemned to be shot.

Late in the spring of 1698, news reached Canada from Europe of the Treaty of Ryswick, which had been signed late in the previous fall.

Now the French raids on the English colonies ceased, and for a few years Schenectady gained in population, grew prosperous agriculturally, and lived relatively free from warfare.

The war in Europe broke out again in 1701 and bloodshed was renewed in America. This war was known in America as Queen Anne's War. Mohawk Valley farmers did their work with muskets always at hand and often built log shelters in their fields from which they could shoot. Many of the more substantial houses in the vicinity of Schenectady contained loopholes between the logs or stones; others were palisaded as a protective measure. These homes fortified as places of refuge were scattered throughout the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys. They continued to be erected and used until after the Revolution.

There was formerly a tablet on the Schenectady-Amsterdam Highway, about three miles west of Scotia, calling attention to one such "fort" on the bend of the Mohawk River just east of the present Boston and Maine Railroad bridge:

> Tinker Hill
> Site of Blockhouse near River Bank, Built by Capt. Teunis Swart. Stockaded and Armed with Field Piece in War of Revolution.

This blockhouse was so situated that it commanded the river and the Glenville Hills to the north. The area at that time was known as *Tincker Hooghten* (Tinker Hill), although there is no record of any tinker's having lived at this place, neither is there any nearby hill. Swart's Fort, as it later became known in the region, was merely his substantial brick house surrounded by a palisade.[1] It mounted a cannon which is said to have been on a swivel, and undoubtedly its walls were pierced to permit rifle fire and its windows heavily shuttered and likewise pierced.

Captain Swart's fieldpiece later became a friendly bone of contention among the younger men of Scotia, Glenville, and Charlton at Fourth of July celebrations. The custom was to load the old cannon as heavily as possible in order to produce a maximal noise. Finally the Glenville

[1] The land on which it stood was once owned by an ancestor of the present author. As a boy he often saw flat baked bricks scattered in the area and picked up many arrowheads after the ground had been plowed.

boys loaded it beyond its endurance and it burst into a thousand pieces. Luckily no one was injured. The Tinker Hill blockhouse was taken down in 1873.

Another place of refuge was the *Schoullen Bosche*, a fort or blockhouse somewhere at the foot of what is now the Broadway Hill. It must have been in a thickly wooded area, for the name means "hiding in the woods." It was intended for emergency use by those living at a distance from the thickly settled portion of the village. The construction was of heavy timbers, making it impregnable to the bullets of those times. The first story was 12 feet square and eight feet high. The second story projected four feet over each of the four sides of the first floor. The walls and the floor of the second story were perforated with loopholes which could be used to snipe at any attackers who approached the door or attempted to set fire to the structure. The door was the only aperture in the first story, and this was a massive timber affair securely fastened by large wooden pins. The roof was of such a pitch as to make it almost impossible for a firebrand to lodge upon it and remain sufficiently long to set fire to the structure.

The second stockade served, however, as the main place of refuge. But as it was constructed of pine logs, it inevitably required a great deal of repairing to keep it serviceable. It was therefore augmented, in 1705, by the Queen's New Fort. Over the years this too required a great deal of repair, so in 1735 the Fort was rebuilt in the more substantial manner described on the tablet.

After the close of the Revolution the defenses were never renewed and Schenectady became an unfortified open village. One by one the forts and blockhouses which for so long had afforded havens of refuge to the pioneers fell into disuse and disappeared.

But forts and blockhouses, deeds and allotments, trapping and trading never were the whole picture in old Schenectady. Unlike the sober Puritans of New England, the Dutch settlers brought with them to the New World a tradition of gaiety and jollity. They remembered and practiced the customs, feasts, and frolics of their beloved Holland, making merry, from generation to generation, as they celebrated their weddings, their christenings, St. Nicholas Day, and their *kermises* (fairs) in a happy mood with their entire families.

The Dutch delighted in eating and drinking. At half past eight at night when the Dutchman heard the "suppaun bell," he made his way

home to eat his bowl of "suppaun" (corn meal) and milk, but on feast days, he, with his family and guests in bright holiday dress, sat down at a table graced with the choicest viands.

St. Nicholas or Santa Claus Day on December 6th was a carnival of rollicking fun for young and old; then followed on the 25th the Christmas feast, when the turkey, with all the accompanying delicacies that the *gude vrovw* (good wife) knew so well how to provide, fairly made the table groan.

The Puritans barred St. Nicholas; the Dutch spent not one but many days honoring him, decorating their churches and their homes as part of the celebration. The Dutch boys and girls pictured him as a round, rosy-cheeked, jolly old man with a low-crowned hat, Flemish trunked hose, and a long pipe. He drove his sled with the prancing reindeer over the roofs and, coming silently down the chimneys, filled the stockings of the good children with toys. As the men and women of those days generally married several times, the family connections became quite extensive and a large company was present to enter into the fun-making and feasting.

St. Nicholas's gifts made many little children joyous, but woe to the luckless ones who had been disobedient or naughty, for a proper punishment and salutary mortification was sure to await them as a reminder in the shape of a trim little birchen rod, a piece of hard black coal nicely wrapped in paper, or a dried pig's tail hidden under a tray of choice dainties.

The Rev. Samuel Kirkland, a Scotch Congregational minister from New England, in 1769 wrote in his journal a description of Christmas on the Mohawk. "The manner in wch ye ppl in yse parts keep Hman day in commemor'g of the birth of ye Savior, as ye pretend is very effect'g and strik'g. They generally assemble for read'y prayers, or Divine Service, but after they eat, drink, and make merry. They allow of no work, or service labor on ys day and ye follow their servants are free – but drink'g Sweeri'ng fighting and frolock'g not only allowed, but seem to be essential to ye joy of ye da."

Most popular of all songs current among the Dutch while that language was the tongue of the people was the one sung on December 5th,

the evening before the Festival of St. Nicholas (which did not take place on December 25th):

Sancte Clause goede heylig man!
Trek uw beste Tabeart aen,
Reis Daer mee na Amsterdam,
Van Amsterdam na 'Spanje,
Daer Appelen van Oranje
Daer Appelen van Granaten
Die rollen door de Straten

Sancte Clause, myn goede Vriend!
Ik heb U allen tyd gediend;
Wilt U my wat geven
Dan dien ik U al mun leven.

The English translation is this:

Saint Nicholas, good holy man!
Put on thy Tabard [gown], the best you can,
Go clad therewith to Amsterdam,
From Amsterdam to Hispanje [Spain]
Where apples bright as orange surnamed
Roll through the streets, all free, unclaimed.

Saint Nicholas, my dear good friend!
To serve you ever was my end,
If you will now me something give,
I'll serve you ever while I live.

Even the rituals observed at the time of death were not entirely solemn. The custom of providing refreshments at funerals continued among the Dutch for a long time, surviving even as late as 1825. *Koekjes* (small, sweet cakes) were passed around at such times in large baskets. Wine was served from pails and was freely drunk. Many persons would return home from a funeral bearing very definite evidence of having imbibed too freely. Pipes and tobacco were also hospitably provided at these gatherings. An order to a tobacconist in 1770 reads, "I have sent the following bearer for four dozen of pipes and a few pounds of Tobacco for the burial of Mr. [—'s] child wh' please to charge to me."

The greatest of all festive days in the Dutch calendar was *nieu jaar* (New Year's). Greetings, gifts, and visits were the order of the day; fun, frolic, dancing, refreshments, and sleighrides constituted the merriments of the night.

From early morning until the stroke of midnight there was the accustomed greeting:

I wish you a Happy New Year –
Long may you live
Much may you give
Happy may you die
And inherit the kingdom of Heaven
bye and bye

In Dutch:

Ik wench ugelukzalig nieu jaar:
Dat gy lang leven mog –
Veel geven mog –
Ende Koningryk Van himmel erven mogs

For young and old the traditional *nieu jaar kookies* or *oley koecks* held a deep fascination. With skill and care these delicacies were made by the dozens to meet the demands. A sweetened dough was rolled over iron or wooden molds to imprint such motifs as baskets of flowers, figures of birds, lodge emblems, and Happy New Year's greetings. The thin slabs of dough were carefully removed from the molds and were scalloped along the edges with a "gigging iron." Then the designs were sprinkled with various colors of "sugar sand," that is, sugar which had been colored in the summer or fall with beet juice, blackberries, or black walnut bark, had been thoroughly hardened, and then pulverized. The cookies were baked to a light straw color. The reputation of many a housewife, marriageable widow, or maiden rested very largely on the delicacy of her *koecks* and the intricacy of her artistic embellishment of them.

At New Year's time, baskets of *oley koecks* stood in each hallway, and, as the door knocker sounded, the householder, his wife, and family went to present the caller with *koecks* and to exchange greetings – "Ik wench ugelukzalig nieu jaar . . ."

When New Year's Day had passed there were collections in many homes which represented the interchanges of friends; and the comparative merits of the cakes were discussed for weeks afterwards. It was considered a great honor to have cakes from certain families, but the secret of the excellence of the best cakes was jealously guarded.

Some of the recipes, perhaps once secret, survive however. The following appeared in the *Schenectady Cook Book*, published in 1890 by the Dutch Reformed Church:

Dutch New Year Cakes

Seven pounds of flour, three pounds of sugar, twenty-eight ounces of shortening (half butter and half lard), one pint of water, one-half teaspoonful of soda. Rub shortening and sugar together, add the water next and flour very gradually. Work a very long time until smooth. Then roll on molds.

Dutch Oleycooks of A. D. 1750

One pint of milk, one cup of fresh yeast, flour to make a stiff batter. Mix at night and in the morning add five eggs, two cups of sugar, one cup of shortening (half butter and half lard), one teaspoonful of soda, flour to make like bread dough, let stand until light which will be two or three hours. Have ready chopped apples, sweetened and flavored with nutmegs and raisins. Roll and cut in pieces about four inches square. Place a teaspoon of apple on each square, double over and pinch together. Drop in hot lard to fry.

The number of cookies carried away by guests of the family was small in comparison with the supply distributed to troops of boys and girls who knocked on the door from early morning until dark, and were rewarded for their kindly "Happy New Year!" by the gift of cakes. The children, often of the less fortunate families, carried baskets or bags and went to every door of the better sort of homes, learning soon how to make the best house-to-house canvass. It was the early child that received the finest cakes, for hospitality waned as the day wore on, the freshness of the greetings wore off, and the supply of cakes diminished. A careful lookout was kept for repeaters or those whose bags or baskets were already overflowing.

In the rural areas sleighs were made comfortable with straw and packed with happy crowds that went from house to house singing old-time songs, remaining for a few hours to dance and to sample eggnog or buttered rum. Then, with the blowing of horns, the merry shouts of parting, and the jingling of the sleigh bells, they were off for more impromptu calls until the break of dawn.

Next to New Year's Day, *Paus* (Easter) and *Pingster* (Whit Sunday) were the most popular and most generally observed holidays of the old Dutch in the Mohawk Valley. *Paus* was primarily a Sunday for religious observances, but *Pingster* was a particularly gala time when both young and old engaged in jollity and boisterous fun. The celebration began with sports in the morning and continued until late at night with indoor games and dancing. There was "egg-butting," a custom which has been carried over into the egg rolling at Easter time on the White House lawn in Washington. "Riding-at-the-ring" was also a very popular sport – an adaptation perhaps of the tournaments of the days of chivalry. The necessary arrangement was a cord tied across a road just above the heads of young men on horseback. From the cord a finger ring was suspended by a short cord. Each contestant was supplied with a pointed stick about the size of a lead pencil which he held between his thumb and his first finger. The competitors were obliged to ride three times at full gallop under the cord and attempt to thrust their "lances" through the ring and carry it off. After a contestant had got the ring, he was chased by all the others and if he succeeded in reaching a predetermined goal without being caught he was the winner. The prize was the payment by the other contestants of the bill for himself and his best girl at a dance and supper to be given in the evening. If, however, he was caught he was obliged to pay the bill for his captor and *his* best girl. There were variations of this. When eligible maidens hung their rings, the winner had the privilege of escorting the owner of the captured ring to the dance.

For a week before *Pingster*, the inhabitants, both black and white, began to make ready for the festival by erecting in certain designated areas booths of boughs from the newly leafed-out trees. In these booths were set food and drink. Besides the "egg-butting" and "riding-at-the-ring," there were impromptu horse races, wrestling matches and most

likely the usual scraps. Music for dancing in the evening was provided by local fiddlers.

Pingster was a great day for the slaves. They were generally given liberty to enjoy themselves according to their own ideas. The usual way of so doing was a dance. The music was obtained from a huge drum-like instrument four or five feet long and a foot in diameter, covered at either end by a tightly stretched sheepskin. This instrument was played by the oldest slave in the community, who would beat the sheepskin with his palms and fingers. At the same time another slave would sing a weird song which, as the excitement increased, would become wild and hilarious and was accompanied by muscular contortions, wagging and twisting of the head, and rolling of the eyes. One after another of the slaves would join in the dance as the spirit moved him, until the musician was surrounded by a ring of twisting, wriggling, hysterical dancers. As one by one they fell to the ground exhausted, their places would be taken by others who felt the spirit enter them. It was not unusual for this wild dance to continue through two days and nights.

THE TIME OF THE FRENCH-INDIAN WARS

ABRAHAM YATES HOUSE

109 Union St., Built in the early 18th Century
One of the oldest houses in Schenectady.

MARKERS RECALLING THE TIME OF THE FRENCH-INDIAN WARS 1744 to 1760

MARKERS EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY: The Battle of Beukendaal

About two miles up the Sacandaga Road from Scotia stands the following marker:

> BEUKENDAAL, 1748
> Dutch Word Meaning Beechdale.
> DeGraff House Where 40
> Schenectady Militia Fought
> Off French-Indian Raiding Party.

This is one of three markers which commemorate the only military action to occur near Schenectady during the long 18th-century struggle between the Canadian French and the English for control of North America. Beukendaal was another incident in the same prolonged conflict that had produced the Massacre of 1690.

By the mid-1700's, the tension between the two great powers had greatly increased. A final showdown was inevitable, and it came, of course, with the French and Indian War of 1753-1760. In the course of this seven-year war, the English and their allies successfully campaigned against the Canadian French and their Indian allies at various points in turn. First, there were expeditions to the north, for control of Lakes George and Champlain and the entire Hudson Valley. Then the English subdued the French stronghold of Fort Niagara to the west, and finally forced the capitulation of the key Canadian cities of Quebec and Montreal. With the fall of Montreal in 1760 all of Canada became English territory and the French threat at last had ended for good.

None of the fighting during this decisive struggle actually took place anywhere near Schenectady, though many Schenectadians were involved in the various campaigns and the settlement itself was very important as a supply base and center of transportation. However, the French and Indian War was preceded by a whole series of indecisive

smaller wars between the New Yorkers and the Canadians. It was during the last of these preliminary wars, started by Louis XV in 1744, that the Battle of Beukendaal took place. Louis's aim in this "Old" French War, as it is called, was to stop the steady advance of the English Colonies toward the north and west – that is, toward Canada. Ironically, the Old French War was officially over by the time Beukendaal occurred, though none of the combatants was aware of this.

When the French Commandant, Le Sieur Chevalier de Repentigny, left Montreal on June 24, 1748, to invade the English Colony of New York, he had not yet received the news that peace between the two nations had been declared at Aix-la-Chapelle, France, a month earlier. Thus the only major bloodshed of the entire war took place illegally and pointlessly. In his book *The Mohawk*, Codman Hislop writes of this abortive war:

> Five years of border alarms and one mighty victory at Louisburg, and nothing to show for them; Louisburg was given back to the French, Crown Point was not even mentioned, and all the frontier wounds left to fester. The Mohawk Valley had braced itself for siege, collected its Indians and farmer-militiamen for attack, and the only thing that happened along the river was the bloody battle of Beukendaal.

However, to the settlement at Schenectady, the battle of Beukendaal entailed the greatest loss of life the colony had suffered since the Massacre of 1690.

Since the turn of the century, hardy frontiersmen from Scotia and Schenectady had been moving into the wilderness along the Indian trails of Sacandaga and Mohawk on the north side of the river. In 1712 Karel Hansen Toll had acquired practically the whole "flat," and adjoining upland, which was then the western limit of the Schenectady patent. He also held title to property at the Maalwyck (Place of the Whirlpool) about one mile west of the Glen estate and at Beukendaal (also called Bookendale, Poopendale, or Beechdale). The latter property he had left to his son Daniel. In 1717 Captain Daniel Toll had built a home there, in the English fashion rather than the Dutch, called the "Old Stone House." And here Daniel had lived until the death of his wife in 1743. He then moved his family to his father's house at Maalwyck, which was

less isolated and hence safer from Indian attack. Here he was living at the time the French and Indian force approached from the north.

That bright July morning there was to be a barnraising on the Toll property, but first Daniel Toll wanted to locate five lost horses. He, his Negro servant Rykert, and Dirk Van Vorst set out to look for them at Beukendaal. The searchers were attracted by a noise emanating from a meadow through which runs a small stream on the east side of the present Sacandaga Road hill. This was the Kleykuil, or Clay Pit. Legend has it that the French and Indian force, totaling over 100 men, had paused here to play a game similar to horseshoes or quoits, and that this was actually a trap to catch the colonists. As the settlers drew near, the invaders opened fire and killed Captain Toll; Dirk Van Vorst was wounded in the arm and taken prisoner; Rykert escaped and ran to Schenectady for help.

In Schenectady, Lieutenant John Darling, in charge of the Connecticut troops stationed there, gave the exhausted Rykert a horse to ride. The bell of the Dutch Reformed Church was rung to summon additional men to the fort, including available members of Schenectady's own militia. The latter were under the command of Colonel Jacob C. Glen, whose cousin Jacob Glen died in the ensuing battle. Four separate sorties were made from the Schenectady fort, the troops ferrying across the river and landing near the present Sanders home. Why these defending troops, totaling no more than 40 men, divided their efforts can never be known.

The French and Indians no doubt expected the slave Rykert to bring armed help back with him; but, confident in their strength, they laid an ambush in a ravine. They propped Toll's body up against a tree and – so legend tells – attached a fluttering crow to his wrist to make him seem to be gesturing. The Connecticut men were the first to arrive; they saw no enemy, but only the Captain waving them on; then the Indians, concealed in the ravine, opened fire. Lieutenant Darling and seven of his soldiers were killed. A second wave of Dutch fared little better. The third wave broke and fled at the sight of the yelling, hideously painted savages, who by now had rushed out with hatchets and scalping knives to engage the defenders in hand-to-hand fighting. Some of this group escaped from the ravine and eight of them took refuge in the little Abram De Graaf house, then empty, which stood on the west side of the Sacandaga Road until it was torn down in 1915. De Graaf had built

the house in 1747, but had not finished it when Indians captured him with one of his sons and took them both to Canada.

The eight defenders quickly barricaded De Graaf's door, then went up to the second floor, where they pried off clapboards to make holes to shoot through. Several times the Indians tried to set fire to the building but were prevented by the defenders' musket fire. Nicholas De Graaf, another of Abram's sons, was among the Schenectady men still outside. Armed with a good musket, he at first fought at long range, but then in rage he tried to grapple with the invaders. The next day his hacked and mangled body was found with a tuft of hair clutched in his death grasp.

Finally a fourth party arrived from Schenectady, and the Indians retreated up the Sacandaga trail with 13 prisoners.

An almost hysterical letter, written three days later (on July 21) by one of the survivors, Albert Van Slyck, to Sir William Johnson, who was England's Superintendent of Indian affairs in the Mohawk Valley, states that 26 men were killed and 25 scalps taken by the French and Indians. Adrian Van Slyck was killed but not scalped because the Indians were hurrying away. The Beukendaal Chapter of the Schenectady Daughters of the American Revolution erected a marker in 1929 which lists those killed in the battle:

1748 1929

In Memory
Of the men who were killed
in the ravine in the
Beukendaal Battle on July 18, 1748,
by the Canadian Indians

John A. Bradt	Peter Vrooman	Cornelis Viele, Junior
Johannes Marinus	Daniel Van Antwerpen	Nicholas De Graaf
Adrian Van Slyck	Jacob Glen, Junior	Adam Conde
J. P. Van Antwerpen	Frans Van Der Bogart	Captain Daniel Toll

who were citizens. Also Lieutenant John Darling and seven Connecticut soldiers stationed at Schenectady.

Sadly the survivors took the dead in wagons to Abram Mabee's barn in the rear of the present 10-12 North Church Street, Schenectady.

Here relatives claimed the bodies. At the site of the North Gate of the first stockade (now the intersection of Church and Front Streets) is a marker recalling this gruesome homecoming:

> BEUKENDAEL SKIRMISH, July 18, 1748
> This occurred in Glenville about three miles northerly from city. Sixty citizens were drawn into ambush by Indians, thirty-nine were killed. Dead were brought through this gate to barn on lot north of present Dutch Church.

Beukendaal was a great blow to this small community; among the dead were several of its most active citizens.

Several discrepancies in the three markers commemorating Beukendaal must be attributed to the fact that the defending forces were seriously disorganized and the whole affair was badly reported.

Daniel Toll's barn which was to have been raised the day that Beukendaal took place was finally completed and stood until a generation ago, when it was blown down. The Toll house was demolished in 1915. Its site was acquired by the State when the Sacandaga Road was straightened at that point. The present frame house at Beukendaal was built in 1842, on nearly the same site and from timber cut on the property. The lintel of the original house, with "D.T.1717" on it, is now stored in a former corn crib. Descendants of the builders of the Toll homestead at Beukendaal still live on the property, which the family has now owned for two-and-a-half centuries.

One interesting aftermath of Beukendaal has had very little publicity. Some time after the battle, an officer of the Schenectady Militia went to Canada to bargain for the return of prisoners. To his surprise, three refused to return with him.

One prisoner, Rachel Quakenbos, had renounced her English religion and could not be persuaded to go home. Had she found romance in Canada? Or did she perhaps enjoy a certain freedom and prestige among the Indians which she had never known at home? On the latter point, John Witthoft, Pennsylvania State Anthropologist, has this to say:

> Many white women who had been taken captive in warfare and who had become members of Indian communities refused to be ransomed; they would not return to the drudgery and subordination accorded women in Colonial society. The Indian woman, seen in native ideology as mother and gardener, was the central and most important member of the household; rather than being a mere drudge, she held an elevated position which is rather difficult for us to imagine. The Indian woman held a more privileged and equal position in her society than women do in any European or American white community today. The Indian saw women's roles as religious matters, with garden and hearth activities delegated to women by the Creator, with the crops as a gift to the women by the supernaturals in return for labor and proper conduct of life.

Simon Fort and Philip Phillipse also elected to remain with the Indians. Fort had been adopted by a sister of a chief named Agonareche. This type of adoption was quite common among the Indians. They frequently replaced lost members of their family by adopting prisoners. This was an economically sound practice because it made the prisoner a productive unit of the family rather than a liability. Also, it strengthened the membership of the tribe.

In Simon Fort's case, however, there must have been more than mere economics at work. The Dutch offered 600 livres for him without success. On the contrary, his squaw owner was so determined to keep him, that, though she would obey the French Commander's order to release him, she vowed that she and her husband would follow him and that he should not reach home alive.

MARKERS TWENTY-ONE AND TWENTY-TWO: The Camp

From the beginning, Schenectady was destined, because of its location, to become an important staging area in the movement of military supplies and troops. Up to the time of the turnpikes (the early 1800's) the roads were few and poor. Only by water could heavy merchandise or large numbers of men be transported efficiently. And Schenectady stood, in effect, at the junction of two great water routes: the south-north route, comprising the Hudson River, Lakes George and Champlain, and the St. Lawrence; and the east-west route, comprising the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, Oneida Lake, the Oneida and Oswego

Rivers, Lake Ontario, and again the St. Lawrence. To put it another way, for many decades Schenectady was a major link between the frontier country to its north and west and the more heavily settled country to the south and east.

This aspect of the city's past is reflected rather interestingly in the story of a site long known as "The Camp." The Camp was a large area along the western bank of the river between the Sanders place and the Toll farm. A State marker locating it stands at the river's side a block or two west of the Sanders Mansion in Scotia:

> THE CAMP, 1755-1812
> American Armies Camping Ground on Mohawk River Flats West of Glen-Sanders House.

This site was used periodically as a mustering ground for nearly 150 years. It was occupied by Indian war parties, by colonial forces during the French and Indian Wars, by the Continental Army during the Revolution, and even as late as the War of 1812.

The famous "Black Watch" regiment of Scottish Highlanders, in their colorful and rich tartans and with their noisy bagpipes, camped there in 1756. Two years later Captain John Bradstreet quartered his troops there en route against Fort Frontenac, at the head of the St. Lawrence. In 1759 the forces of Prideaux and Sir William Johnson stopped there during their march toward Fort Niagara, at the mouth of the Niagara River.

But the most impressive use of The Camp as a staging area occurred in the final year of the French and Indian War. The event is commemorated by a marker in Schenectady, at the corner of State Street and Washington Avenue, which reads:

> CANADA 1760
> Amherst with 6000 Americans, 4000 British & 200 Boats Marched via Mohawk & Oswego to Capture of Montreal Sept. 8, 1760.

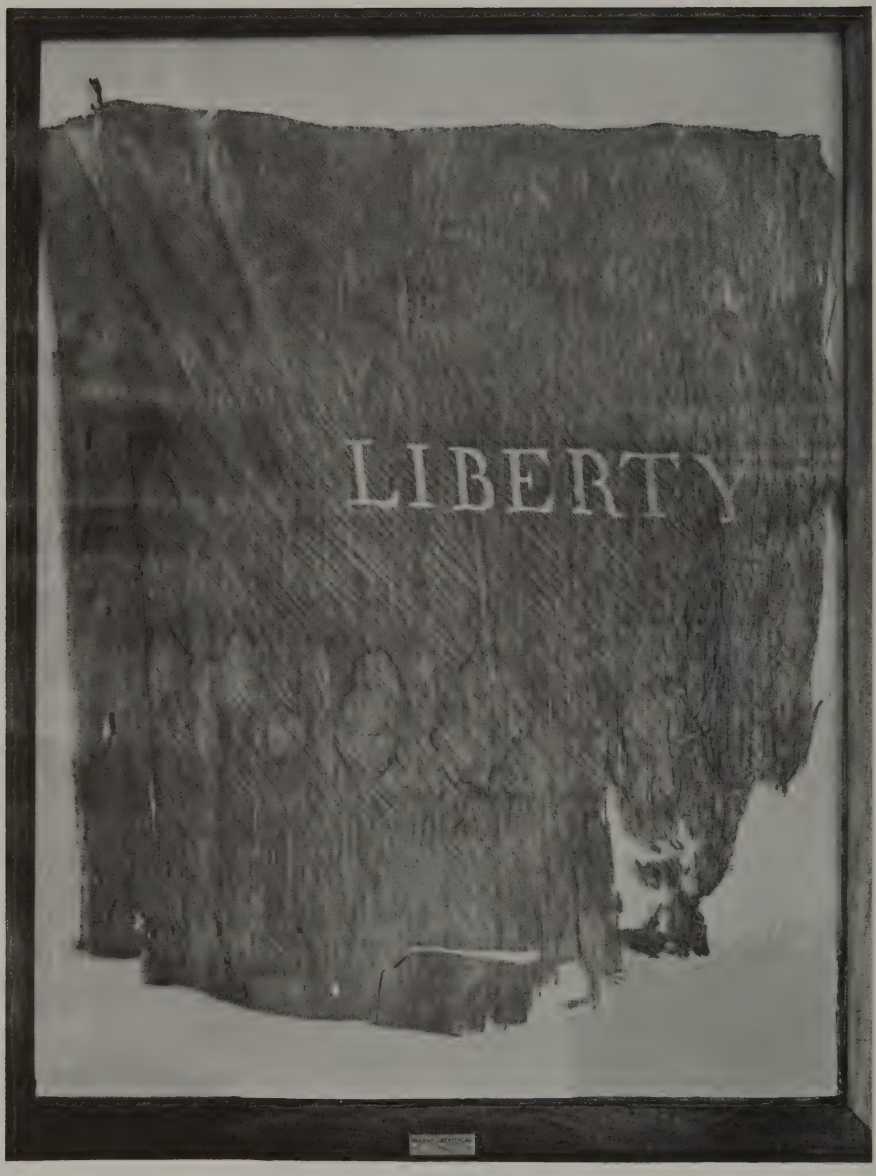
Amherst was the lord Jeffrey Amherst associated with the college of his name. General Amherst's army of 10,000 was the largest group ever to

assemble on the camp ground. Codman Hislop in *The Mohawk* notes that "Schenectady must have been a minor kind of bedlam. On the 'Camp' in Scotia, across the Mohawk river from the Town, Amherst had assembled the greatest army the Mohawk Valley had ever seen . . ." It is claimed that these British regulars and colonial recruits were located on the Glenville side of the river in order to protect them from the temptations of the larger town of Schenectady; no doubt General Amherst also had in mind the advisability of protecting the town from his far more numerous soldiers.

The picture that the marker conveys of 200 boats "marching" is not as ridiculous as it may at first seem. For the route which Amherst was taking toward Montreal (via the old war trail up the Mohawk to Fort Stanwix, down Wood Creek, across Oneida Lake, and down the Oneida and Oswego Rivers to Lake Ontario) required many difficult "carries," where the soldiers had to pick up their boats and walk with them. The streams used contained numerous rapids and waterfalls which had to be bypassed; Wood Creek at Fort Stanwix (Rome) was little more than a meadow brook; and the water route was not continuous, so portages would have been necessary even if the rivers had been wholly navigable. It must have been an enormous task to move such an army, with their supplies, across a vast expanse of virgin forest. But Amherst accomplished it, as Prideaux and Johnson had done before him in 1759, and as Bradstreet had done in 1758.

During the War of 1812, American troops used The Camp; the Mohawk Valley Militia, which included many Schenectady men, was active in this war on the Niagara and Saint Lawrence frontiers.

THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION



LIBERTY FLAG

This flag in the Schenectady County Historical Society Museum, believed to have belonged to Sons of Liberty.

MARKERS RECALLING THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION 1774 to 1783

MARKER TWENTY-THREE: Sir John Johnson and the Tories

During the War for Independence, as had been true earlier during the French and Indian War, no major engagements actually took place at or near Schenectady. And yet the town was involved in many ways in all of the campaigns to the north and west. Being the Gateway to the Mohawk Valley and the West, Schenectady was bound to be important as a supply depot, a transportation center, a stopping-off place for military forces, and a behind-the-lines medical center. It was also a perennial source of recruits for both sides. Finally, because of its location in the no man's land between the largely pro-American colonies to the south and east *and* various heavily pro-British factions (both white and Indian) to the north and west, Schenectady inevitably had to deal with problems arising from conflicts of loyalty.

Ironically, the earliest of our markers which brings to mind the growing dissension between the colonials and the British is a tablet commemorating the founding of a "lodge" of the first fraternal order to reach Schenectady:

FREE MASONRY
St. George's Lodge, No. 6 F & AM
Founded here 1774
Auspices of Sir John Johnson
Grand Master, New York Colony.

This marker is located in the park opposite the Y.M.C.A.

Freemasonry got under way relatively late in the Dutch colonies because the Dutch Reformed Church disapproved of secret societies. Therefore, it was not until after the English took over that officers and merchants who had been Masons in England began meeting in homes and taverns. The first Lodge was founded in New York City on De-

cember 7, 1757. Master Lodge No. 2 (now No. 5) in the City of Albany was established on March 5, 1768. From this Lodge, Sir John Johnson was permitted to warrant a Lodge at Schenectady. Following the prescribed Masonic regulations, he assembled such a Lodge in 1774, and named it St. George's Lodge, as suggested by Sir John Johnson.

And herein lies the connection between this marker and the coming war. For Sir John Johnson, only son of Sir William Johnson of French and Indian War fame, inevitably emerged for a short time as the most influential Tory leader in the Mohawk Valley. Sir John did not command anything like the remarkable personal authority which his father had enjoyed. However, most of the Iroquois – and especially the Mohawks – remained loyal to him and to the Johnson name. As early as 1775 – only a year after he founded Schenectady's Masonic Lodge – he felt it necessary, after open warfare broke out in New England, to fortify his home at Johnstown. Then, in 1776 Sir John and a force of fellow Tories at Johnstown surrendered bloodlessly to General Philip Schuyler's army of 3000 men. Having promised to remain neutral, Sir John went free; but the same year he broke his parole and fled to Canada, taking many Tories and his loyal Mohawk Indians with him. From Montreal Johnson was then able to launch or assist in numerous campaigns against the Continentals throughout the remainder of the War. In 1777 he lent his support to an army composed of British, Hessians, and Canadians which fought at the Battle of Oriskany, the bloodiest encounter of the entire Revolution. General Nicholas Herkimer and his colonial troops won the battle and saved Fort Stanwix, thus stopping an English invasion from the west via the old War Trail along the Mohawk to Schenectady and on to Albany.

But Sir John and his fellow Tories were far from giving up. The next year they raided Springfield, Andrustown, and German Flatts. Later that year they wiped out the settlement at Cherry Valley. Washington then planned the Clinton-Sullivan expedition of 1779 as a means of stopping these raids once and for all. Continental forces marched through the heart of the country inhabited by Sir John's allies, completely destroying entire villages, burning fields and cutting down orchards, wiping out food supplies, and doing untold damage. The Indians never did recover from this blow. The British fort at Niagara was also to have been captured by the Clinton-Sullivan forces. Had this been done, all further danger from the west might have ended. But it

was not, and Niagara continued to serve as a launching pad for Tory and Indian raids on the Mohawk Valley.

Thus in 1780 Sir John was once again able to lead a force, mostly Indians who were now more bloodthirsty than ever, against patriot settlements. This time their targets were Tribes Hill and Caughnawaga. Later the same year Sir John and his close ally, the great Mohawk chieftain Joseph Brant, burned and pillaged the entire length of the Schoharie Valley. These raids continued into 1781. In October of that year, during a raid on Johnstown, which had once been his own home, Sir John and his forces were defeated, but managed to retreat through the Adirondacks. The final engagement of the War took place, during this retreat, at West Canada Creek. Here Walter Butler, the most infamous of Sir John's Tory allies, was finally killed, to the great relief of the Americans. Actually this battle need never have occurred, for Cornwallis had already surrendered all of his British forces, on October 19th.

And yet Sir John Johnson had also been responsible, only a few years before, for the establishment of the first fraternal lodge in Schenectady. The original membership of the lodge, in 1774, must have included men who were to become mortal enemies as soon as the war started. As a matter of fact, it was in the same year that the first "Committee of Safety" was organized in Schenectady.

Such committees, also known as Committees for Conspiracies, were made up of prominent local citizens and were common throughout the colonies during the War for Independence. The Schenectady Committee included 10 men. One of its many functions was to investigate charges of "un-American" activity – that is, behavior indicative of pro-British sentiment. The great majority of the residents of Schenectady were patriots, but there were left among them enough Loyalists to keep the air tense with suspicion. For example, the owner of the famous tavern in which the Masonic Lodge used to meet fortnightly when it was first organized was at one time complained of to the Committee of Safety.

This man was Robert Clench. He had come to America as a drum major under General Braddock and was well-known to General Washington. After Braddock's defeat, Clench had lived in Pennsylvania, but came to Schenectady in 1769 and established his inn, at the corner of State and Water Streets, the site now occupied by a little park or plaza.

In 1776 he was reported to the Committee as being sympathetic to the English cause; actually, the Committee was well satisfied of his patriotism and gave the complaint little attention. But Clench took offense at the charge and apparently vented his anger on the Lodge, for shortly thereafter the Masons shifted their meetings to the home of Abram V. Truax, who had provided a room for this purpose at the Lodge's expense.

As was to happen so often nearly a century later, during the Civil War, members of the same family sometimes joined opposite sides at the time of the Revolution. This happened, for instance, among the six sons of Arent Stevens of Schenectady, who had acted as a confidential agent for Sir William Johnson. The eldest son, Jonathan, had been killed "fighting like a lion" for Johnson at the Battle of Lake George. Two of the younger sons, John and William, are mentioned in the records of the Schenectady Committee of Safety as "fire wardens." William was also a second lieutenant in the Third Schenectady Company of Militia. But the third son, Nicholas, was a Tory. He refused to take the Oath of Allegiance tendered him by the Committee of Safety and eventually was removed to the enemy's lines.

One of the Schenectady Committee's first official acts was to buy 335 pounds of gunpowder from Daniel Campbell, a local merchant. For some reason he had stored this big supply of much-wanted merchandise in Albany. Campbell had applied to the Albany Committee for permission to move his powder, whereupon the Albany Committee reported the case by letter to its counterpart in Schenectady. The latter Committee promptly acted as follows:

> Having taken the contents of said letter into consideration, and foreseeing the evil consequent that may attend the powder falling into the hands of our enemies, Resolved, that this Board will purchase the said powder from Daniel Campbell for the use of the inhabitants of this township and others who may stand in need thereof.

These minutes are dated May 16, 1775, only a month after the Battle of Lexington. The war was on, and the Committee was taking no chances. It bought the powder for three shillings per pound. Two men were

appointed custodians of it and empowered to sell it to any local resident at three shillings nine pence per pound. No powder was to be sold outside the district without an order from the Committee.

The Committee of Safety also raised three companies of minutemen or militia: two in the town and one in the Woestina. Each company consisted of a captain, two lieutenants, four sergeants, three corporals, a drum, and 50 privates. According to colonial military law these companies were "to be ready on the shortest notice to march to any Plaace where their Assistance was required for the Defense of their own or a Neighboring Colony."

In addition, by virtue of a resolution of the Continental Congress of August 22, 1775, a patrol or watch was organized which was to consist of two men to "go round thrue all the Streets in the Towne every hour." A "centry was to be fixed in the Boxx on the top of the watch house to be relieved every hour."

The community must have been concerned about its Negro slaves, for the Committee of Safety resolved: "That the Town Wach be very diligent in apprehending all Negroes that may be found to run on the Streets after ten o'clock . . . to confine them in the Wach House . . . their owners may release them by paying three shillings for Each Negro, or else they are to receive thirty lashes on their Naked Backs."

In 1777 when news of the British advance on Ticonderoga reached Schenectady, all of the local militia not already on duty were given orders to march northeast to Fort Edward. This order caused great anxiety to many of the inhabitants, and petitions were addressed to the Committee of Safety asking them to allow the militia to remain in town, "on account of the alarming news from the Westward." Of course, with most of the militia away, an excellent opportunity was afforded any Tories who might still be in the neighborhood. An order was passed that "those who remained should be detained in the Town and a Watch of twenty-five men be kept Day and Night." Reports of Tory gatherings were brought to the Committee of Safety, and a detail of Continental troops then in town was dispatched for their apprehension. Eleven Tories were taken prisoner and their arms and accoutrements were impounded.

MARKERS TWENTY-FOUR AND TWENTY-FIVE:
The Hospital and The Burial Ground

There is a monument on the corner of Union and Lafayette Streets which reads:

> On this site stood
> During the Revolutionary War
> The General Hospital for the
> Northern Department and the
> Continental Barracks
> Built by order of
> General Washington November
> 1776 and used until 1780 by
> Troops passing through or
> Stationed in this town.
> A burial ground for soldiers
> Occupied the rear of the lot.

The bodies buried here were later removed to a vault in the side of the ravine in Vale Cemetery. On the face of the vault is carved:

> Sacred to the memory of
> 57 American soldiers who were buried
> in Schenectady during the Revolution.
> Their remains were disinterred Nov. 1854
> and reinterred with Military honors.
> In August, 1859, they were again moved
> and placed beneath this stone.

Among the dead honored by this memorial may lie some Schenectady regulars and minutemen. However, for the most part the Schenectadians seem to have been relatively lucky in their military service. For instance, many Schenectady troops accompanied General Benedict Arnold, after the colonial victory at Oriskany (1771), on his march to the relief of Fort Stanwix, which was under siege by St. Leger. But the expedition proved to be almost bloodless, for the English were scared away by reports of the approach of Arnold's army. The march did, of course, have a very definite effect on the outcome of the war, in that it effectively destroyed all British hope of reinforcing, from the west, Burgoyne's great army, which was moving south from Montreal.

But few, if any, Schenectady troops ended up as casualties in this campaign.

As for the minutemen, they usually fared similarly. Though they repeatedly marched out from Schenectady to face Indian and Tory raiders of nearby communities, more often than not they came back unscathed. On May 30, 1778, Chief Joseph Brant led his Indian-Tory force in an attack on the settlement at Cobleskill. Brant was a brilliant young Mohawk whom the late great Sir William Johnson had practically brought up, Brant's sister, Molly, having been one of Johnson's common-law wives and the mother of eight of his surviving children. Like most of the Mohawks, Brant was pro-British out of loyalty to Sir William and because they had fought so successfully under Johnson during the French and Indian War. A force of 119 men from the Schenectady Militia went to the aid of Cobleskill, but arrived only in time to bury the dead.

That same year, after the massacre at Wyoming on the Susquehanna, Brant made his long-expected raid on German Flatts. The regiment from Schenectady set out to attack the raiders, who simply retreated upon their arrival.

Again in the same year, Captain Walter Butler, who like Joseph Brant was one of Sir John Johnson's right-hand men, fell upon the settlers at Cherry Valley. The Schenectady Militia wanted to go to their relief, but the distance was too great to make it practical. Afterward, many survivors of the raid were brought to Schenectady, where they were given money, food, and clothing.

Finally, in 1779, the inhabitants of Schenectady were thrown into panic when news arrived that Johnson, Butler, and Brant with a large force were on their way to Fort Hunter at the mouth of Schoharie Creek. Tories and Indians did enormous damage in the Schoharie Valley, destroying farm animals and crops and burning farm buildings before retreating. It is said that the glow from fires in Schoharie Village was visible in Schenectady. The next morning many of the Schenectady Militia marched up the valley in vain pursuit of the raiders. A day or so later the militia brought the wounded from Schoharie in bateaux down the river to Schenectady.

MARKER TWENTY-SIX:
The Clinton-Sullivan Expedition

Though Schenectady was not the scene of any military engagements during the Revolution, it served as a key base of supplies for several campaigns. One of these is commemorated by a marker in the park in front of the present Y.M.C.A.:

> **CLINTON'S EXPEDITION**
> **June 11, 1779 left with 1500 Men and 200 Batteaux for Sullivan Campaign against Iroquois.**

This expedition was the colonial leaders' answer to the continuous raiding of Mohawk Valley settlements by the Tories and their Indian allies.

Apparently Washington and such of his advisors as Generals Philip Schuyler and George Clinton felt that without their Indian allies, who furnished most of the Tories' manpower, the latter would be impotent to continue their warfare. The Clinton-Sullivan campaign was therefore directed primarily against the Iroquois; hence it was at first called "The Indian Expedition."

For many years before the Revolution, Sir William Johnson, as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the English, had exercised tremendous influence over the councils of the Six Nations. A great many Iroquois had fought valiantly by his side against the Canadian French and Indians. Thus Sir William, who died the year before the War of Independence started, had prepared the Indians for loyalty to the Crown. Consequently the pleas for neutrality which the colonials made to the Iroquois were largely unheeded. Only the Oneidas, some of the Tuscaroras, and individual chiefs among the other tribes chose to keep out of the fight or to help the Continentals. The rest of the Iroquois were firm and active allies of the English.

The Clinton-Sullivan Expedition was designed to eliminate these hostile Indians from the war by destroying their food supplies and at the same time to strike a severe blow at the British commissary. Most of the pro-British Indians were living, along with many white Royalists, in the Finger Lakes region, in the Chemung Valley, and along the St. Lawrence River. Marching deep into this country, the colonial forces

destroyed the cornfields, orchards, vegetable gardens, food supplies, and the buildings of the Iroquois and Tories. The victims were now forced to fall back on the British for food and so became a burden rather than an asset. At the same time, the expedition also seriously reduced the British food supply by cutting off the flow of dried vegetables, fruits, and meats which the Indians had been providing. The Continentals also did vast damage to the corn and wheat crops, much of which would have been taken to Niagara, Oswego, Montreal, and Quebec to be ground into flour for the use of both army and navy as mush, griddle cakes, corn bread, and pudding.

The campaign badly crippled the English war effort from the west and north, but it did not end the Indian-Tory raids completely. As late as October 1781, a British major named Ross led an Indian force against Warrenbush, a farming community on the south side of the Mohawk between Schenectady and Amsterdam. Schenectady was at once ordered reinforced, but these orders were shortly countermanded as word arrived that the enemy, after burning Warrenbush, had retired toward Johnstown. The next day Ross was attacked, lost about 50 soldiers, and again retreated. Colonel Willett of Fort Plain and a band of Oneida Indians from Schenectady pursued him and finally overtook him at West Canada Creek. In the skirmish that followed, the detested Walter Butler was one of the casualties. When the news of his death spread down the Mohawk, the patriots rejoiced, illuminating their houses and even forcing the Tories to do the same.

The fighting at Canada Creek was the last to take place near Schenectady. As noted earlier, the bloody encounter need never have happened at all, had it only been known that Cornwallis had already surrendered at Yorktown 10 days earlier (on October 19, 1781).

The major part of Col. Willett's colonial force at Canada Creek consisted of Oneida Indians. Many members of this tribe were quartered at Schenectady during the latter part of the war, after having been driven from their homes by the British and the pro-British Iroquois. These refugees had first gone to Fort Schuyler. But, the provisions there being inadequate to feed 406 Indians in addition to the regular garrison, they were then transferred to Schenectady and quartered in barracks and in the hospital building referred to earlier.

Here the Oneidas remained until winter, when the quarters were also needed for troops. During the winter it was the practice to distribute

all reserve regiments as widely as possible, in order to prevent serious food shortages in some localities. Arguments soon arose between the whites and the Indians quartered in the same buildings at Schenectady. The officers were therefore billeted with the townspeople, leaving only the enlisted men to share the Indians' quarters. The two factions still could not get along, so the Indians were moved to a wooded area beside the road to Albany. This area, then the "pine plains" from which Schenectady derives its name (in Indian the word means "The Place Beyond the Pines"), is now the Woodlawn section of Schenectady and the Pine Bush community. There the Oneidas built rude shelters or dug caves into the hillsides. Over the years the government meagerly furnished them with rations of wheat and sometimes flour. With these and the food they got from hunting and fishing they were just able to exist.

They became a shiftless sort of folk – dark and swarthy, with long straight hair, high cheek bones, and a copper complexion. Their clothes were shabby, consisting of castoffs of the townspeople. They did not cultivate land nor work steadily at any occupation. The men earned small sums by performing for the townspeople such menial tasks as sawing wood, digging wells, and cleaning outdoor toilets. This gave them at least the money to buy liquor, which they imbibed in liberal quantities. The women sold berries, wove baskets, told fortunes, and read palms. Both men and women supplemented their needs by begging and stealing, at both of which they were highly proficient. This practice was also very common among their children. It is said that as late as 1830 the Albany Turnpike was beset by ragged, dirty urchins so persistent in begging for pennies that they would follow a gig or wagon for half a mile before giving up.

The descendants of these people came to be known as Yances or Yancies – just why is an enigma. Perhaps one of their early leaders may have been named Yanje or Yonce or the like and his name became generic for them all.

"You're a Yancy!" became a derogatory expression often heard locally about a century ago. It was applied to any disreputable person who was indisposed to work, not very particular about personal appearance, and not averse to appropriating other people's property.

In the early 1800's, the First Presbyterian Church established a mission for the Yancies. Called then the East Avenue Presbyterian Church, it is now, because of a change in street name, known as the State Street Presbyterian Church.

The Indian Yancies were finally assimilated through intermarriage with their neighbors.

MARKERS TWENTY-SEVEN AND TWENTY-EIGHT: Visits by Washington

Schenectady had the honor of entertaining General Washington at least twice, and possibly three times. Opinions differ in regard to the number of visits.

One historian, writing in 1879, avers that "the first occasion was a hurried visit soon after the commencement of the Revolution to make arrangements for frontier defenses. He then dined and lodged at the residence of John Glen, who was Quartermaster of the department, and his brother, Henry Glen, deputy, stationed at Schenectady." This visit is commemorated by a marker in front of the Glen House at 58 Washington Avenue, which reads:

> JOHN GLEN HOUSE 1740
> Washington occupied N. E. Bedroom, second floor on first visit to Schenectady in 1775

It seems highly reasonable that Washington should have made such a tour of inspection at that time and that he should, for military reasons, have stayed with the quartermaster of the Northern Department of his Continental Army. Less likely is the claim (by the same historian) that "he then also took tea at the residence of . . . John Sanders." The General must have been an extremely busy man at this stage of the war, and one wonders if he would have had time for a purely social call. Many historians therefore question the truth of a second marker, standing in front of 43 Washington Avenue, which reads in part:

> ROBERT SANDERS HOUSE 1750
> Washington visited here in 1775. Later became Schenectady Female Academy.

There seems, however, to be no doubt about General Washington's second visit, on June 30, 1782, for it is well documented. General Schuyler had repeatedly invited his superior to visit him at Albany. On June 24, 1782, Washington wrote from his headquarters at Newburgh to Comte de Rochambeau, Commander of the French troops in America: "I am setting out for Albany on a visit to my posts . . . My stay will not exceed eight or ten days." Washington was entertained the first day by Governor Clinton; on the second he was escorted by General Gansevoort to the Saratoga Battlefield; and on the following day he rode with General Schuyler to Schenectady in a carriage. Five miles outside the city, 60 citizens on horseback met him and at the gate he was welcomed by 100 Oneida and Tuscarora Indians in full war paint. Bells pealed and cannon boomed as he dined with the magistrates, military officers, and citizens. The dinner was held in Robert Clench's tavern on the corner of State and Water Streets. At the table were assembled the principal citizens to honor Generals Washington and Schuyler and Colonels Abraham Wemple and Frederick Vischer. As a mark of honor Washington assigned the seat on his right to the gallant Vischer, a war hero who had survived being scalped when his house near Fonda was burned by Johnson's raiders.

Apparently Washington spent the night at Schenectady and attended a Sunday morning service in the Dutch Reformed Church on the last Sunday in June. Domine Barent Vrooman must have felt deeply honored when he looked down from his high pulpit and saw General George Washington in the congregation.[1]

Perhaps on that summer Sunday in Schenectady the General had the pleasure of hearing the chorister Cornelius De Graff; or perhaps not, for De Graff may have been just starting his noteworthy career when in 1794 the consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church enlisted his aid. Wishing to improve the quality of the psalm singing in the public worship, they issued the following:

> Resolved: that Cornelius De Graff, the chorister, shall use his endeavors in each family of this village and elsewhere to obtain pupils in singing on the condition that each shall pay one shilling

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[1] It may perhaps seem puzzling that General Washington did not attend St. George's Church. But in 1777 Rev. Doty, a Tory, had left his charge and the church was rectorless until 1791.

and six pence a month, the Consistory also adding thereto for each scholar for the term of six months, one shilling and six pence a month, provided a certificate be shown to the consistory signed by Mr. De Graff that each scholar has diligently spent his time as he ought.

The Consistory also recommended that "Mr. Degraff in singing shall try to observe the half-notes and soften his voice as much as possible." If tradition tells the truth of his singing, the advice last given him was by no means inappropriate, for it is said that while sitting on his "stoep" on State Street, Cornelius De Graff sang psalms so loudly that they could be clearly heard two miles up the river.

During his visit in 1782, Washington sent a note to the consistory:

To the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the Town of Schenectady.

Gentlemen:

I sincerely thank you for your congratulations on my arrival at this place.

While I join in adoring that Supreme Being to whom alone can be attributed the signal success of our arms, I cannot but be visibly affected by so distinguished a testimony of your approbation and affection.

May the same Providence that has heretofor in so remarkable manner evidenced the justice of our Cause, lead us to a speedy and honorable peace, and may its attendant blessings soon restore this once flourishing town to its former prosperity.

G. Washington

Schenectady: June 30, 1782.

Possibly Washington visited Schenectady again, in 1783, for during that summer he informed General Schuyler at Saratoga that he "was leaving [Newburgh] to visit the theatres of military transactions" and asked that boats be arranged for at Lake George. To the President of Congress he wrote: "I have . . . northward as far as Ticonderoga and Crown Point and perhaps as far up the Mohawk River as Fort Schuyler."

Leaving Mrs. Washington at Newburgh, he set out with Governor Clinton on July 10, 1783, by barge for Albany. Thence he journeyed northward to Lake George, later visiting Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point. On his return he passed through Saratoga and Ballston[1] and may have stopped over in Schenectady. If so, he probably stayed at Clench's Tavern, it being the finest hostelry in town. In any case, he apparently did proceed up the Mohawk Valley to Fort Stanwix and returned by way of Cherry Valley and Canajoharie to Schenectady. The next day, according to some historians, he called on General North at Duanesburg where General von Steuben was staying. This seems doubtful, because the North house was not built until later. That night Washington was back in Albany.

Jeptha R. Simms, in his *The Frontiersmen of New York*, mentions an amusing incident which occurred during one of Washington's visits to Schenectady. It appears that while he was walking on the street with Captain Banker, a local patriot, an old Negro in passing them removed his hat and bowed respectfully. Washington immediately returned the compliment, much to the surprise of Banker, who suggested that it was not the custom of the country to notice slaves.

"I cannot be less civil than a poor Negro," Washington replied, as they walked on.

It may well have behooved a "poor Negro" to be civil in those days. Back in 1740 a Negro belonging to Simon Toll was suspected of setting fire to several buildings in the village. A mob seized him, took him out on the Albany Turnpike, and burned him at the stake. In 1756, a Negro known only as Jerry suffered a similar fate. He had sought refuge in Schenectady after having betrayed General Braddock to the French and Indians at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In those days, when persons could be hanged or burned to death for such a trivial offense as stealing a loaf of bread, the betraying of an army officer called for drastic treatment. Someone – a British soldier or a Loyalist – passed the word to some Iroquois Indians who were friendly with the British that Jerry was hiding in the cellar of Harmon Van Slyke's home. All about the village, the Indians began to chant the death song and continued to do so until after Jerry was killed. He was taken several miles up the river on the south side and his head severed from his body. Then the Indians placed

[1] Up until a few years ago the mineral springs at Ballston were far better known than those at Saratoga.

his head on a pole near the stockade at Ferry Street where it remained for some time.

These lynchings and murders were not, of course, typical of the community's attitude toward its slaves. Two advertisements which ran in a Schenectady paper no doubt reflect that attitude much more accurately.

The *Cabinet* of November 18, 1816, offers for sale:

> A lively, healthy young black boy about fourteen or fifteen years of age. He has been brought up to do housework, till within two or three years, since which such time he has worked on a farm. Inquire of the Printer.
>
> A healthy, active industrious black woman about thirty years of age. She is sold for no fault but for want of employ. For further particulars inquire at this office.

MARKER TWENTY-NINE: Visit by Lafayette

Schenectady markers honor two European heroes of the American Revolution – the Frenchman Lafayette and the Pole Pulaski.

The Lafayette plaque is at the corner of Front and Church Streets, where Joseph C. Yates, the city's first mayor, once had his office. Yates, at the time of the visit referred to on the marker, was Governor of New York.

> Cur non?
> On June 11, 1825
> Major General Marquis de Lafayette,
> soldier, statesman, Citizen of France and
> of the United States was the guest
> of the Honorable Joseph C. Yates,
> Governor of the State of New York
> Erected by
> the American Friends of Lafayette,
> May 20, 1961.

Paying at that time his farewell visit to America, Lafayette was one of the first foreign dignitaries to pass through the recently opened Erie Canal.

When Lafayette visited Schenectady, he was 68 years old. He had arrived in America the preceding August (1824) on the invitation of President Monroe. Congress, which had requested the President to invite him, voted him an award, for past services, of almost $25,000 and an estate comprising an entire township, his own fortune having been confiscated in 1792 during the Reign of Terror.

At about eight o'clock in the evening on which he was to arrive at Schenectady, a deputation from the Committee of Arrangements proceeded by carriage along the line of the canal until they met his boat. As he was a Mason, a portion of that fraternity also sailed up the canal to meet him.

In the city, the streets had been thronged since early morning with citizens and strangers, and the military had been passing and repassing in every direction. At length the company of heavy artillery stationed on the Canal Bridge near Water Street fired the welcoming salute. The bustling, gleeful crowd seemed to double. The bridges and both banks of the canal were completely lined with men and women, old and young, impatient to catch a glimpse of the General and anxious to swell with their voices the universal shout of "Welcome Lafayette!"

He landed at Union Street in front of the City Hall and was conducted by Dr. Eliphalet Nott (President of Union College), Isaac Schermerhorn (Mayor of the city), and others to a pavilion erected nearby for the reception.

Later a procession was formed which conducted him through Union, Church, and State Streets to a banquet at Given's Hotel, located just east of the canal, on State Street. Here he was honored with many a courteous toast.

At about 10 o'clock the General, accompanied by the Mayor, called on Governor Yates. The guest was then escorted to Stanford's Half-Way House on the Albany Turnpike, where he was met by an escort from Albany. He arrived in Albany about three o'clock on Sunday morning. Early on Monday morning he left Albany for Boston.

Lafayette Street, one of Schenectady's cross-town streets, was named in his honor.

MARKER THIRTY: Tribute to Pulaski

Schenectady has erected a memorial statue of a Polish-born hero of the American Revolution, Casimir Pulaski. It stands just east of what was formerly called Crescent Park, in the angle between State and Albany Streets. On the base of the monument are these words:

> UNION MAKES
> VALOR STRONGER
>
> Count Casimir Pulaski — Polish friend of America in The Revolutionary War — Distinguished himself on General George Washington's Staff in the Battle of Brandywine. Commissioned Brigadier General, fought at Germantown and other battles in Winter of 1777-78. By Resolution of Congress was authorized to form Pulaski Legion. Mortally wounded at Savannah Georgia and died Oct. 11, 1779.

The monument stands on the location of Schenectady's first and second armories, the latter one having been demolished when the present one was built on Washington Avenue.

The American people should feel especially indebted to the young Polish soldier who, during the most crucial time in our struggle for independence, left his native land to take his stand for freedom beside the American colonists.

In 1777 he sailed for America to join Washington. He so admirably acquitted himself as a staff officer at the Battle of Brandywine that he was made a brigadier general in charge of cavalry. He fought at Germantown and in the battles during the winter of 1777-1778. After this he raised a mixed corps called the Pulaski Legion with which he defended Charleston, South Carolina, in May, 1779.

During the siege of Savannah he rendered invaluable service, and in the assault of October 9, 1779, he commanded both the French and American cavalry. Toward the close of this action he was mortally wounded in the upper part of his right thigh and died on October 11, aboard the brig *Wasp*, where he had been taken for medical care. His body was buried at sea.

MARKER THIRTY-ONE: Nick Veeder and Son

Next door to Schenectady, in the cemetery of the Scotia Reformed Church, stands a tombstone reading:

> Nicholas G. Veeder
> The last soldier of the
> American Revolution in
> New York State,
> who fought in General Herkimer's Army
> for Freedom's Cause in 1776.
> Born December 25, 1761,
> Died April 7, 1862

Nick Veeder was 15 when he shouldered arms and followed General Herkimer into action at the Battle of Oriskany; he was 101 years old when, as New York State's last surviving veteran of the Revolution, he died at his home on Halcyon Street in Scotia.

He was always in great public demand on the Fourth of July. It was absolutely necessary to have him lead the local procession, dressed in his old regimentals and shouldering his musket; otherwise, it was thought that the Day of Independence had been inappropriately observed.

After Nick's death it became the turn of his son Abe to shine in the spotlight vacated by his father. Abe had acquired an education far above the ordinary one for the times and had taught school for a number of years. He was considered something of a dandy and was very meticulous about his dress and manners, so different from his father's. It was said that his coat and waistcoat buttons were made of silver quarter-dollar pieces polished until they shone.

But after a time he also became an eccentric. Nothing was too old to fascinate him nor too unconventional for him to attempt. He collected relics of the Revolution, and dubbed the place "The Old Fort and Great American Novelty Works." The Fort and Novelty Works attained such popularity that the New York Central Railroad ran a special train there every Sunday afternoon in the early 1860's.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CITY

HON. JOSEPH C. YATES
First Mayor of Schenectady 1798-1808
Governor of New York State 1823-1824

MARKERS RECALLING THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CITY 1798 to 1861

MARKER THIRTY-TWO: Incorporation of Schenectady

The next three markers recall a period of about 60 years (1798-1861) during which Schenectady was relatively free of the tensions of war. In these years the city was incorporated (Marker 32) and, under the leadership of her first mayor, Joseph C. Yates (Marker 33), set up a new government and laws. The laws reflect a city no longer predominantly Dutch in spirit but one strongly influenced by the Puritan tradition of the Yankee. During these 60 years, the city's first bank was chartered (Marker 34) and the first directory – a sort of 1841-snapshot – was printed. The directory offers a glimpse of the city after the first and before the second of three disastrous 19th-century fires. On the site of the present City Hall, at the corner of Jay and Liberty Streets, is a state marker citing four dates in the city's history:

SCHENECTADY
Settled by the Dutch under Arent Van Curler
1661
Borough 1765
City 1798
County Seat 1808

By an act of the legislature, Schenectady was incorporated as a city on March 26, 1798. The corporation was divided into four wards. The first and second wards were made up of the area within the ancient limits of the settlement, the third ward was Rotterdam, and the fourth was Glenville. The government was vested in a mayor and a council made up of two aldermen and two assistant aldermen from each ward. Joseph C. Yates was appointed mayor by the Governor and the State Council of Appointment.

Yates held the first meeting of the Common Council on April 9, 1798, in the Schenectady Academy Building at the corner of Union and Ferry Streets. Their first act was to select a police force. This consisted of eight night watchmen under Carl and Andrew Reynex, who were made chiefs. Each chief had charge of one of the wards in the city limits and was paid 50 cents per night; the six men under them each received 37½ cents. From this salary they were required to furnish the candles for their lanterns and also to supply the wood for a stove in the watch house, which might be thought of as the police headquarters. This building was on Ferry Street and was rented for two dollars per month. The watchmen, each carrying an official five-foot staff, were required to walk the streets and at each street corner call out the hour. They were also required to apprehend all stray slaves, for whom the masters had to pay a retrieving fee of 50 cents.

At their first meeting the council adopted rules governing the dignity of office. The first of these required the members to enter the Chamber with bared heads. They were permitted to converse sitting, standing, or walking about until the entrance of the mayor. This was a signal to observe strict silence except when addressing the chair. The second rule established a fine of from 25 cents to three dollars for being absent from a meeting. The third and fourth rules permitted members to hold the floor indefinitely unless a vote was called for and also provided for the entering of the "yeas" and "nays" in the council minutes. These four rules remained unaltered and were enforced for 20 years.

Mayor Yates and his council also put into effect certain fire laws. Everybody became, by statute, a fireman under the authority of the aldermen, who, on the occasion of a fire, donned white sashes as badges of authority. A fine of two dollars and 50 cents was imposed for refusing to obey their commands. Smoking near shavings was prohibited, as was the carrying of uncovered coals from one building to another.

Another of the council's early laws forbade the roving of pigs in the city unless they had rings in their snouts to prevent their tearing up the roads. Another law required householders to leave oil lamps burning over their doors at night. And although many roisterers considered it a mere prank to steal one of these lamps, the council decreed that anyone caught stealing one would be liable to a fine of 50 pounds.

They also passed laws requiring the stall-keepers in the public market to keep their stalls supplied with "plenty of all sorts of meat and fresh

vegetables" and forbidding butchers to withhold from any customer a choice cut of meat on the pretext that it had been reserved by another. The penalty for this kind of favoritism was forfeiture of the butcher's license.

Mayor Yates and his council also took great care for the morals of the young men sent to their city to attend Union College. They enacted "blue laws" which made liable to a 25-dollar fine "anyone who enticed or permitted a student to gamble." "It is forbidden," these laws state, "to give or sell a student a glass of wine or to rent a room for festive purposes. Theatrical exhibitions, puppet shows, wire dances, feats of horsemanship, or any such idle shows of any sort are prohibited." Even to shelter a strolling player was against the law in the Schenectady of that day – at the time, incidentally, when John Howard Payne, later one of America's celebrated playwrights, was attending Union College.

The regulations of Mayor Yates's tenure are not uniquely strict. In 1855, long before national Prohibition, another Schenectady mayor issued the following notice:

To the Citizens of Schenectady,

Mayor's Office, May 7, 1855.

All licenses given for the sale of liquor in this city expire on Tuesday, the 8th day of May, and in accordance with the present law all persons who sell after that day are liable to the penalties prescribed by law. We have had the opinion of Judge Johnson, together with many others, and there seems to exist a diversity of opinion in regard to its constitutionality.[1] I can only add to those of our citizens who are engaged in the liquor business, to examine the law, and advise them to comply with its requirements.

The act relating to the prohibition of the liquor traffic is now a law, holding the same position as any other law and until decided invalid by the courts, or amended by the Legislature, should command the same obedience.

It does not come within the range of my duties to make laws, but when they are made it becomes my duty to see them enforced.

[1] The law in question was a provision of the state law described as "an act for prevention of intemperance, pauperism, and crime."

I cannot, therefore, without dishonor, shrink from a faithful discharge of a trust confided to me by my constituents.

It has been highly gratifying to me to witness the indictments which have already manifested themselves on the part of the citizens of a disposition to submit to the operation of the law. Such indications are in the highest degree creditable and cannot fail of producing their legitimate effect upon the community around us in elevating our character in a moral point of view, and distinguishing us, as in an eminent degree, a law-abiding people.

In the performance of my duty I trust I shall receive the aid, countenance, and support of all good citizens.

Abel Smith, Mayor.

MARKER THIRTY-THREE: The First Mayor

On a house at 26 Front Street is a plaque:

> Here was born
> Joseph C. Yates,
> November 9, 1768.
> He was the first mayor of Schenectady, State Senator, Judge of the Supreme Court, and Governor of the State of New York. Died at his residence, East corner Governor's Lane, March 19, 1837

His father, Christopher Yates, was one of the principal figures in Schenectady before the Revolution and served in that as well as in the French and Indian War which preceded it.

Young Joseph received his early education from a private tutor and afterwards attended an academy. He then studied law in the office of his father's cousin in Albany and finally returned to Schenectady to open his own office after having been admitted to the bar. He was an able lawyer and a public-spirited citizen, serving the city of Schenectady as her first mayor, although Isaac Vrooman had previously served as mayor of the borough. Yates was also one of the founders of Union College and the first president of Schenectady's first savings bank. In 1805 he was elected to the State Senate and in 1808 was appointed one of the judges of the State Supreme Court. As a judge he was noted for his common sense, uprightness, and clear, accurate decisions.

Joseph Yates became governor of New York State in 1822. The new constitution, adopted the year before, caused him much difficulty in the appointment of a great many officers whose tenure of office had been changed by the law. The city of Albany was thronged with place-hunters and their appointments were a serious problem to the new governor. As a result of this and for other reasons, among them his view of the proposal to change the electoral law of the state, Governor Yates fell into disfavor and at the expiration of his term of office retired to private life and again made his home in Schenectady.

In person Joseph Yates was a tall, fine-looking man with a large shapely head, a prominent nose, full lips, and a clean-shaven, rosy face. His bearing was excellent and his voice and manner bespoke the gentleman. He was a man of boundless industry and his courtesy and fair dealing were only a few of his many fine qualities. He died on March 9, 1837.

Two of the most destructive fires the city has ever experienced occurred in 1819 and 1843. The fire on the night of November 17, 1819, swept through the oldest part of the city, doing its heaviest damage in approximately the area of the old stockade. It broke out south of State Street on Water Street in Isaac Haight's leather currying shop, probably through the spontaneous combustion of a drying oil used in treating hides. Whipped by a strong wind, the fire spread to buildings on Church, Union, and State Streets and to the great warehouses on the western side of Washington Avenue and their docks along the Binnekill.

Schenectady was at the time a river port, the first west of Albany. Huge quantities of grain and other merchandise, which had been carted overland from Albany and elsewhere, were stored there along the Binnekill, awaiting river shipment. These goods, about 100 commercial buildings, and about 60 dwellings were destroyed. No bucket brigade could cope with this fire, though Schenectady law did provide for such emergency brigades.

Each householder was required to have a leather fire bucket on hand. When fire broke out, he was to set his bucket in front of the house for the use of the volunteer fire department and other fire fighters. The firemen formed a bucket line from the burning building to a water supply – the river, a cistern, or a well. They passed the full buckets from hand to hand and returned them empty in the same manner.

After the 1819 fire, the business section of the town moved four or five blocks eastward, nearer the area where in 1825 the Erie Canal was to be dug. The west end, or downtown, became largely residential.

By 1843, Wall Street, a short street running north off State Street and just east of the canal, was in the midst of the new commercial center. There, on April 4th, a fire started at the New York Central Railroad station – set perhaps by an arsonist, perhaps by sparks from a locomotive – destroying mercantile buildings and dwellings there, including the station and its blacksmith shops.

The fire-fighting equipment now included hand-operated pumps drawing from numerous large cisterns in the streets. A small hand-operated fire engine belonging to Union College was also used by volunteering students in fighting this fire.

A third big fire occurred in August, 1861. Repairs were being made to the tar roof of Otis Smith's broom factory at the foot of Cucumber Alley (now West Front Street) between Washington Avenue and the Binnekill. The pitch which was being used caught fire and ran down the building in a fiery stream into a quantity of dry broomcorn. A high gale blowing from the northwest carried the fire from house to house along Washington Avenue. Panic seized the city as the flying embers settled on roofs to the eastward of the blaze. People tried frantically to keep their shingles from catching fire. It is said that there were more people on the roofs of the city than there were in the streets. The steeple of the old Dutch Reformed Church at the corner of Union and Church Streets caught fire from flying embers, but it is said that little effort was made to save it. The pastor did not conceal his thanksgiving that the Almighty had seen fit in this way to grant his prayers for a new church.

After the fire had burned itself out, a large portion of the western part of the city was a blackened smouldering mass. The church and many of today's substantial homes on Washington Avenue, Church Street, and Union Street were rebuilt not long afterwards.

Otis Smith's broom factory, where the fire originated, was one of many such factories in the city and on the Mohawk River flats in the 1860's. Schenectady was at that time the broomcorn center of the world.

Partly because of the fires of 1819, 1843, and 1861, Schenectady for a time suffered industrially. The lag is reflected in the history of her nickname, "Old Dorp." Originally, *dorp*, the Dutch word for village,

was, of course, an accurate designation. But for a time during the early 19th century the name was used derisively, casting a slur on the city for its shrunken industry. Today the old nickname persists, but with a connotation of affection and pride for the city's almost phenomenal progress.

What was the city like in 1841? The first city directory was published that year by T. and W. H. Riggs at 23 Union Street. The directory lists the names and addresses of 1,350 inhabitants. The names are, with but one exception, Dutch and English. The exception is a Portuguese, John Xavier, who kept a toy shop on State Street. The addresses are on 21 different streets: Albany, Barrett, Bowery (now Lafayette), Canal, Church, College, Dock, Fonda, Franklin, Front, Jay, John, Lafayette, Liberty, Maiden Lane (now North Broadway), Pine, Rotterdam, Union, Water, White (now Clinton), and Yates.

The directory tells us that Alexander C. Gibson was mayor that year and that the City Council was still made up of 16 aldermen, four from each ward. The city now had 23 lawyers, 10 physicians, two dentists, two druggists, and a widow who sold "botanic medicine." Listed also are 14 Negroes, probably descendants of the slaves once owned by the old Dutch families. They include a baker, Francis Dana, and a grocer, Hanna May, whose store was at 5 Fonda Street.

By 1841 Schenectady had eight churches, six fire engine companies, four banks, and a circulating library which advertised itself as "having thirteen hundred volumes of choice works as well as the most celebrated English reviews and magazines." The four banks listed were the Mohawk, at Union and Church Streets; the Schenectady Bank and the Schenectady Savings Bank, both at 29 State Street; and the Mercantile Bank, at 33 State Street.

MARKER THIRTY-FOUR:
Schenectady's First Chartered Bank

The Mohawk Bank, the first to be chartered in Schenectady, opened on April 21, 1808, in a dwelling on the east side of Church Street, between Union and Front Streets. This building, having escaped all three of the fires, is still standing. It bears a plaque commemorating the bank's original home:

1807
Old Mohawk Bank

The old bank occupied the first floor, and the upper floors were used as a residence by the cashier. A story used to be current that he frequently sat up the greater part of each night, a shotgun in hand, to watch the bank's safe and assure himself that nothing happened to its contents.

The bank must have prospered, for in the spring of 1809 the directors appropriated money for the purchase of a site for a larger building on the northwest corner of Union and Church Streets, the present location of the Mohawk Club. Construction was delayed until 1815, at which time the three-story brick structure was completed. The bank continued at this location for nearly 50 years, during which time the center of business shifted to State Street. In pace with the movement, the bank established itself in new quarters on the north side of State near Church Street. It remained there only a few years; then the directors authorized the purchase of property east of Ferry Street on the south side of State Street, where the bank now stands. In 1865 it became the Mohawk National Bank of Schenectady.

The Schenectady Bank opened in 1830 on the north side of State Street, near Church Street. It remained active until 1902, when it was absorbed by the Schenectady Trust Company. The Schenectady Savings Bank, which conducted its business in the office of the Schenectady Bank, was opened in 1834. The Honorable Joseph C. Yates, the first mayor of Schenectady and the seventh governor of the State, was its first president. In the early days it was open to receive deposits only one day a week – Mondays from 2 to 4 P. M. The accountant was the only salaried officer, and he received 100 dollars per year for his services. In 1906, the Savings Bank, following the eastward trend of business, moved into the present building where Clinton crosses State.

The fourth bank listed in the old directory, the Mercantile Bank, stood on the north side of State Street near Church and operated only from 1839 to 1842.

ADVANCES IN TRANSPORTATION

OLD COVERED BRIDGE ACROSS THE MOHAWK

Bridge connected Schenectady with Scotia and the West 1808-1873

MARKERS RECALLING ADVANCES IN TRANSPORTATION

MARKERS THIRTY-FIVE TO THIRTY-SEVEN: Trails and Waterways

In Glenville, a little northwest of Schenectady, three markers have been placed along an ancient travel route. One of these, just off Route 5, reads:

> Indian Trail
> Used by Algonkian Tribes in passing to and from Hudson Valley and New England.

Each of the other two, one on the county road about one mile east of Glenville and the other on a private road about half a mile west of Glenville, reads:

> Primitive Path
> Here Ran A Great And Well-Beaten Path, Used By The Archaic Algonkin and Other Nations, Going Between The Sea Coast And The Interior.

Along trails and waterways, from the north and the west, the Indian trappers of the early 1600's bore their precious pelts. They came by canoe down the Mohawk to the uninhabited flats, later to be the site of Schenectady, and then carried them overland to Fort Orange (Albany), the Mohawk below Schenectady being largely a series of rapids ending in the 70-foot drop of the falls at Cohoes. Thus, long before any white men settled there, the site of Schenectady was already something of a "port."

And for many years after Van Curler's group founded the colony, the Mohawk River remained the only route, except for primitive trails, from the Hudson Valley westward to the Great Lakes. Albany, receiving furs from the West and west-bound shipments from New Amster-

dam (later New York), had no navigable water-passage between the Hudson and the Mohawk until the completion of the Erie Canal. Therefore all goods moving in either direction had to be unloaded, and often stored temporarily, at each end of the "carry." Both Albany and Schenectady were thus required to function as ports, a role which Albany continues to play to this day.

As the volume of shipping to and from the West increased during the 1700's and early 1800's, Schenectady's importance as a transportation center naturally became steadily greater. Just as naturally, the settlement also became a boat-building center. The earliest river carriers had been the Indian canoes. But in the first quarter of the 18th century canoes, with their limited capacity, gave way to bateaux, which were much larger craft poled, paddled, or towed (by eight to 10 men) over the shallows where the current was swift. The bateaux, in turn, were supplanted by the Durham boats, huge flat-bottomed scows on whose open decks cargoes of from 15 to 20 tons could be carried. Although the Durham boats had sails, these were useful only in fair wind, and the craft often had to be poled. The Durham boats, like their predecessors, traveled up the Mohawk, down Wood Creek, across Oneida Lake, and down the Oneida and Oswego Rivers to Lake Ontario and even into the St. Lawrence. The majority of these river boats were constructed in Schenectady. Thus, throughout the latter part of the 18th century the shore along the Binnekill was lined with shipyards and boat-building shops.

Only by means of this slow and laborious water-route could large quantities of anything be moved between the settled East and the frontier West. For 150 years this centuries-old network of primitive woods trails and natural waterways carried the whole burden of travel along the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys. And it took three centuries for this transportation system to evolve into the modern marvel of concrete and steel which is the New York State Thruway. But this evolution had some interesting stages, as we shall see.

MARKER THIRTY-EIGHT: First Road to the West

Inevitably the colonists soon found that they needed a more adequate overland route to the West. The first road they built, probably in the late 1600's, is commemorated by this marker on Erie Boulevard:

South Shore Road
Colonial-Revolutionary Road
to Fort Stanwix & Oswego.
Route of Troops in Five Wars.

The early settlers ran this road along the south side of the Mohawk, partly because they considered the river a shield of sorts against hostile Indians to the north, partly because only the land south of the river was much developed for many years.

The South Shore Road was essentially a "tote road," little more than a forest path just wide enough for a wagon. These pioneer roads were generally "underbrushed," which meant that the undergrowth and small trees were cut away, and the swampy places were "corduroyed" with logs laid together at right angles to the road to keep wheels out of the mud. The roads twisted and turned to avoid large trees and steep grades. There were no bridges, but the banks at the fords were graded to ease the slope to the water's edge. However, the fords were usable only in the dry seasons of the year. During high water or when the stream was filled with floating ice, fording became impossible.

The next development of a forest road was the removal of the trees which had been circumvented and the stumps of others. But trees growing near the road sent their roots into it, thus making it slippery and hazardous for horses. Dense trees shaded the road and the rich humus of the forest soaked up moisture, making quagmires. The logs laid to form the corduroy stretches rotted fast, leaving the roadway extremely rough and dangerous. Sometimes the corduroy was covered with earth, but this washed away easily.

The infrequent bridges along these old roads were objects of dread, for most of them were built of poles instead of planks and rested on very insecure abutments. Heavily loaded wagons and stages sometimes found both the roads and bridges impassable. These conditions hampered migration to the West and the transport of products from the western farmlands to the eastern markets. Such difficulties of overland travel furnished the strongest arguments for the building of canals during these early years of growth and development.

MARKER THIRTY-NINE: The Turnpikes

As the West grew and traffic got constantly heavier, better roads became a necessity. But road-building was an expensive proposition; the

only solution was to draw on private capital. Thus began the turnpikes, or toll roads.

A marker on Mohawk Avenue in Scotia near the Western Gateway Bridge recalls one of the turnpikes:

> Mohawk Turnpike
> Colonial Highway Westward
> to St. Johnsville.
> Known as "King's Highway"
> Military Road 1812.

But the Mohawk Turnpike was not the first. Before it there came a toll road from Albany to Schenectady. This short highway, constructed by a company incorporated in 1797, followed roughly the course of Schenectady's Albany Street. Work on it began in 1802. It was completed three years later, at a cost of $10,000 per mile. At that time one of the best roads in the state, it was very heavily used because all goods headed either east or west had to pass over it.

These turnpikes were hard-surfaced roads, properly shaped, graded, and drained. They were built with money furnished by stockholders, who were allowed to reimburse themselves by charging toll. Every 10 miles along the road was a tollgate with a turnstile or moveable bars operated by a tollmaster.

The tolls varied, but the maximum was always fixed by the turnpike charter issued by the State. The average toll for each 10 miles was:

12½¢ for a wagon with two horses or oxen
3¢ for each additional horse or ox used to pull the wagon
25¢ for a coach or other pleasure carriage with two horses
12¢ for a one-horse pleasure carriage
6¢ for a one-horse cart
4¢ for a horse and rider
6¢ for a sled or sleigh drawn by two horses or oxen
3¢ for each additional horse or ox
20¢ for each score of horses, cattle, or mules
6¢ for each score of sheep or hogs

The law required that the toll rates be posted at each tollgate along the way. Persons living within a mile of the gate were usually exempt

from tolls at that gate. Other exemptions set by law were for persons going to and from public worship, places of voting on election day, training on muster days, attendance in court on jury or witness service, and essential business at gristmills or blacksmith shops. Persons going for a physician or midwife and, when the streets were being paved, farmers hauling cobblestones were also exempted. Also, certain reductions were made for freight wagons, if their wheels were six inches or more broad, because these heavily-loaded broad wheels helped to keep the road surface hard and smooth. Stagecoach companies and others using the road regularly usually had their tolls commuted, sometimes by one-half. Stagecoach companies settled their accounts quarterly, to avoid constant interruption of their scheduled trips. Though these tolls were a considerable tax on the wagoner and traveler, they were usually paid cheerfully enough as long as the roads were kept in good condition. It was when the turnpike companies seemed to be neglectful of their responsibilities for maintenance that friction arose.

Although the turnpikes did a great deal toward opening up the West, they often were not profitable ventures for the stockholders. In 1828 the Mohawk Turnpike and Bridge Company reported that it was hopelessly in debt, and in 1830 the Albany and Schenectady Turnpike Company reported that for 26 years it had paid dividends at the rate of only two and three-quarters percent per year.

By the time the Mohawk Turnpike was built it was felt that a western highway north of the river was both desirable and safe from Indian attacks. The energies of such 18th-century leaders as Sir William Johnson had greatly developed the territory on the north side. And the threat of hostile Indians and Canadian French had ended for good.

Along these early country highways and through the old city streets moved a procession that represented diverse facets of early American life. Many of the travelers trudged along on foot, with or without their burdens. Others rode on horseback. On a Sabbath morning many a country man rode his horse to "meeting." His wife, wearing her "good" bonnet, rode on a pillion behind his saddle. On weekdays one might meet a merry company cantering to military muster or sometimes, more soberly, there would be a knot of lawyers riding circuit with the judge.

The doctor with his saddlebags, the merchant conning memoranda of accounts, the itinerant preacher studying his Bible or, perhaps, rehearsing his sermon to the trees bordering his route, the butcher with his pack roll of knives, the farmer carrying a sack or two of flour from the mill – all moved along these roads.

Pack trains of from two to 20 horses trucked wares, mainly to retailers, through the sparsely settled country. Peddlers came and went, stopping from door to door. Some of these carried their wares on their backs as though they had walked out of the Middle Ages. In their rolls, ready for display, were combs, jewelry, pins with decorative heads, thimbles, eyeglasses, novelties of all sorts, and drygoods or fabrics. Other peddlers came with earthenware, brooms, hats, shelf-clocks, all securely strapped to their horses' sides. Some – on foot, on horseback, or driving horse-drawn wagons – dealt in all-purpose medicines, guaranteed to cure every ill of man and beast.

But most important of them all was the tin-peddler. The tinware industry depended largely on him for distribution, for his wagon went everywhere. And to the country people, when spring began to open up the roads, the first tin-peddler proclaimed its arrival more loudly than any bluebird. The tin-peddler's old treasure wagon creaked over muddy roads whose ruts were yet little rivers, although a northbound sun was making them shallower. His furry horse, clopping down the front lane, to one house after another, meant the end of winter seclusion. His wagon gleamed and jingled with entrancing wares, piled high or swinging in rows – strainers, spatulas, pails to keep the coffee in or to hunt the eggs with, shining milk pails, cake pans, dustpans, pattypans, and assorted dippers and washbasins. He waited patiently while women in aprons, with delicious indecision, chose from among these and his other products. They examined crumb trays, scenic covers for stovepipe holes, lamps, reflectors, beeswax, thread, calico for new dresses, aprons and bonnets, the coarse and durable "huckaback" or toweling, and even well chains!

The farm boy was often prepared to barter with the tin-peddler, offering a year's accumulation of tinfoil, some scrap iron from the pile behind the barn, or a few spikes picked up along the railroad track. These he might exchange for something of his very own – a fish pole, a line or hooks, or maybe a new knife or a bag of marbles. At some

homes the peddler exchanged wares for his night's lodging and a measure of oats for his horse.

Other fascinating transients came to old Schenectady. On her streets, the lure of music attracted young and old to collect around the hurdy-gurdy. This was a combined mechanical piano, orchestra, and organ. It was mounted on two wheels and was operated by turning a crank. Usually the hurdy-gurdy man was accompanied by a woman who passed a tambourine among the assembled crowd, hoping they would load it with coins. After a selection or so, the man would grasp the two handles attached to the front end of the contraption and move to a new stand.

Of equal interest to the children was the hand-organ man, his music box hung around his neck and supported by one leg. With one hand he turned a crank to make the music and with the other he held a cord attached to the collar of a small monkey. The animal, usually dressed in a gaudy red coat, would scurry up porch rails and into first-floor windows, his hat held out in his forepaws to invite contributions. After he had made the rounds, he would hop back to the top of the hand organ, and off he and his master would go to a new stand.

Then there was the tame bear who strutted along on his hind legs led by a man holding a chain fastened to a ring in the animal's snout.

Perhaps the most exciting of the street amusements for children was the merry-go-round on wheels. It consisted usually of four or five gaily-colored miniature horses arranged in a circle on a large round platform mounted on the back of a low four-wheeled wagon. To the rear was a crank which turned the platform and simultaneously produced music. When the children were safely mounted on the little wooden horses, the owner applied himself to the crank, a tune began, and the platform revolved, carrying with it the happy children on their story-book horses. As soon as the children had run out of pennies, the operator mounted his seat, clucked to his horse, and moved his merry-go-round to another corner.

Old Schenectady was also familiar with the traditionally loudmouthed wagoners. The wagons were great, boat-like vehicles with deep boxes rising fore and aft to keep their loads from sliding on steep grades. The freight was protected from the weather by white hempen cloth stretched across bent bows. A good wagoner could carry 14 barrels of flour or several tons of freight from Schenectady to Albany on one trip. When

there was snow on the roads the wagoners drove huge sleds which could take even more tonnage than the wagons.

However sturdily built, the wagons or sleds were the victims of many mishaps on their arduous passages through deep mire or over stumps and rocks. Wagoners were often seen with pry poles, wrenches, or hammers, toiling at repairs and aided by a great deal of impressive profanity.

The cost of hauling freight from Albany to Schenectady averaged about 16¢ per hundred pounds. But many of the wagoners apparently did not have reputations any too high, for one of their patrons wrote in his diary: "The wagoners are great rogues and should you have a reason for their service, it will not only be well to be very careful but likewise to make your bargain before you employ them or like me you will have to pay for your learning."

Willing to contest the right of way with the wagoners were the drovers. The hard, well-crowned, well-drained roads which made hauling easy lamed the cattle, sheep, or hogs which the drovers convoyed. At the beginning of the 19th century, New York City was drawing its meat from as far north as the Mohawk Valley. Horses, too, were often herded along the highways. Many an unscrupulous drover salted his cattle well before he reached the market so that they would drink a lot of water; the water cost him nothing, but a full-grown beef could drink 50 pounds of it. On the butcher's scales, the water earned him the same three cents a pound which the meat did.

Through Schenectady passed families seeking new homes in the West. Standing by the roadside one might inventory the entire household property of a family as they passed. The poorer families often had a mismatched team of horse and ox. The owner was armed, and his sons rode or walked along beside the wagon. The mother and daughters perched in resignation between the cloth flaps at the rear of the wagon. Around them were piled the iron pots and pans, the meager bedding, a few farm tools – all absolute necessities in the march of empire.

What a marked contrast to this was the man seated in a one-horse cutter (sled) clad in fur cap, muffler, and shawl, and well bundled under a deer or bearskin robe!

One great enterprise which, favored by better bridges and roads, rose to its climax during the half-century after the Revolution, was stagecoaching. The earliest stagecoaches were clumsy wagons with a number of rows of backless benches sheltered by rakish canopies which swayed

from side to side as the vehicles careened over execrable roads. The stages were of all sizes and descriptions. Some were hauled by two horses, others by four, which were replaced by fresh ones at regular intervals. The stage driver was a personage, not only to small boys and hostlers but to the traveling public. He was entrusted with all sorts of valuable papers and packages, which he stored in his bell-crowned beaver or in his greatcoat pockets. Seated in majestic state, whip in hand, he guided his team with a practiced skill that rivaled in impressiveness the performance of an experienced ship's captain. It was not always the winter winds alone which gave his full-rounded face its purplish cast and his abdomen its protuberance; frequent indulgence in the best liquors and foods which the taverns along the route possessed also helped. On the box or in the taproom he heard the leading men of the country engaging in political discussions, reciting merry anecdotes and poems, and exchanging friendly repartee.

In the Mohawk Valley and nearby to Schenectady there were many taverns; some were mere rest stops, others hostelries for the change of horses, and still others offered nightly accommodations. They were welcome sights to the traveler at the close of day, though he might be compelled to sleep on the floor or with some unknown bedfellow – fortunate indeed was the patron able to secure a private bed.

It was a Schenectady tavern keeper, Moses Beal, who established the first stage line west of Albany. His stages ran weekly from Albany, through Schenectady, and up the Mohawk Valley to Canajoharie. Gradually he extended his service farther and farther west; his so-called "Western Mail Stage" held this important route against all opposition.

MARKER FORTY:
Ferries and Bridges Across the Mohawk

In 1936, a state historical marker was placed at the foot of Washington Avenue near the end of an old river bridge:

> Early Bridge
> Wooden Suspension Bridge
> Erected here 1808.
> Designed by Theodore Burr.
> Used by Saratoga Ry. 1832-39
> Replaced 1874.

The problem of getting across the Mohawk was a major one for many years. The earliest crossings were fords at shallow points, one of which was just west of the islands above Schenectady. With the advent of the white settler came an established ferry, a constant reminder of which is the name "Ferry Street."

The first ferry, however, was operated from the northern end of Washington Avenue. Later, when the increase in traffic warranted it, a second ferry was operated from a road connecting the Queen's Fort and the "Rondweg" with the river. This road and the Rondweg became Ferry Street. A third or lower ferry crossed the river farther down, at the present location of the bridge on Route 50.

But the time came when the ferries were inadequate. The exchange of goods between the farmers with their abundant crops, on the north side of the river, and the merchants of the bustling little village, on the south, demanded a more efficient means of crossing the Mohawk. Furthermore, there was the push of the great westward migration: each year more hundreds and then thousands of wagons joined the movement; and the Mohawk Valley was the only water-level route to the West north of the Cumberland Gap through the mountains of Maryland and West Virginia. All of this traffic pointed to the need for bridges.

The bridge commemorated in Marker 40 replaced the Washington Avenue ferry. In fact, both of the upstream ferries were legislated out of existence when the bridge charter was granted. However, the third one, about a mile downriver, continued to operate until 1855, at which time Volney Freeman replaced it with a bridge and the last ferry disappeared.

But the fate of the ferries was sealed as early as 1800. On April 14th of that year, the State Legislature passed a law entitled: An Act to Incorporate the Mohawk Turnpike and Bridge Company. This Act provided for the building of a bridge at Washington Avenue and of an 80-mile turnpike, on the north side of the Mohawk, to connect Schenectady with Utica. The law appointed commissioners to receive subscriptions for stock at the rate of 50 dollars per share. Several years were required to sell the stock and to settle a controversy which arose over the advisability of splitting the enterprise into two, one project to be

handled by the Mohawk Bridge Company and the other by the Mohawk Turnpike Company. The stockholders finally voted to do this in 1805. The date set for completion of the bridge was 1810.

The bridge posed a sizable problem in engineering: 800 feet of water were to be spanned by a wooden structure wide enough for two lanes of traffic. Theodore Burr, a celebrated bridge architect and a cousin of Aaron Burr, designed the structure; David Hersey, a stone mason by trade, was the "boss on the job."

The original plan called for a wooden suspension bridge to be supported in the center of the river by a single stone pier. The pier was constructed during the summer of 1808. The following winter, as soon as the ice on the river was thick enough, fabrication of the wooden cables and of the scaffolding required to put them in place began, on the ice. The work progressed well until a heavy thaw occurred in January, 1809. The river flooded and carried away everything but the center pier. All the material and labor had been expended for nothing.

Swallowing their disappointment, the promoters began immediately to try again. An additional pier was built between the center pier and each of the shore abutments, thus revising the design to allow four spans instead of the original two. The much shorter wooden cables now needed could be fabricated without building temporarily on the ice.

Some of the technical details of this early bridge are most interesting. The roadway was suspended from three great wooden cables, each about three feet thick and one foot wide. There was one cable along either side of the bridge and a third along the middle. The cables passed over heavy timber supports set vertically on the abutments and piers.

The cables themselves were incredibly bulky in comparison with modern steel cables. They were built up of 4-by-12-inch planks from 12 to 14 feet long. The planks were laid one atop the other to a depth of nine planks, thus making the cable 36 inches thick. The planks of each section were overlapped with those of the sections before and after it in such a way as to make a continuous wooden beam. At intervals, great bolts passed through all nine planks to hold them together.

The driveway was suspended from the cables by means of iron rods which passed through the cables and then down through the floor sills.

But instead of being bolted tightly to the sills, the rods supported them by means of removable iron pegs called "keys." Iron plates attached to the underside of the sills rested on these keys. The purpose behind this "key" construction was to enable the roadway to move slightly without damaging the superstructure of the bridge, and also to facilitate the replacement of any part of the roadway which might become damaged. The theory worked: the "floating" roadway was often battered by flood waters, ice, and debris without seriously injuring the bridge; and on the rare occasions when portions of the bridge floor were damaged, repair proved relatively easy. A few "keys" were slipped out, the battered section was removed, and a new unit was fastened into place.

For many years the only covering the bridge had were shingles to protect the great loops of cable where they passed over the supports rising from the piers. Sometime between 1830 and 1835, however, the bridge was completely enclosed, in the course of a major repair job. The cables had begun to stretch, causing the floor to sag between the piers. Additional narrow piers were therefore added, the bridge now resting on seven piers rather than three. But instead of being built just high enough to meet the sagging portions, the new piers rose several feet higher, giving the bridge a wave-like appearance when viewed from upstream or down. To protect them against floating ice and debris, all of these piers were narrow and rounded at the ends facing upriver. Their surface was of cut limestone; they were reinforced by oak timbers 18 inches square and the space between the walls was filled with rubble.

After these basic structural changes had been made, each section of the bridge was roofed and the sides were boarded up. The result was a series of strange-looking barn-like structures. All of these were shingled, top and sides, so that the bridge resembled a long tunnel. It was lighted during the day by means of occasional openings in the sides, and at night by means of four oil lamps.

This being a toll bridge, there were two immense gates at the Schenectady end, one opening away from southbound traffic and the other opening in the opposite direction, to admit northbound traffic onto the bridge. The gates were so hung that they could be unlatched, by means of ropes, from the toll house at the southern entrance to the bridge. However, the toll collector then had to close them personally, by hand, for the law required that travelers be spared all unnecessary delay.

The tolls on the bridge were fixed by law. The rates in 1815 were as follows:

Each head of sheep, hogs, or calves	1½ cents
Each head of horned cattle	9 cents
Each horse, jack, mule or ox, led or driven	9 cents
Two-wheeled pleasure carriage drawn by one horse, jack or mule	18¾ cents
Each additional horse, jack or mule	6¼ cents
Four-wheeled pleasure carriage the body whereof is supported by springs or thorough-braces drawn by one horse, jack or mule	25 cents
Each one-horse stage	18¾ cents
Additional horse	6¼ cents
Freight or burthen wagon, one horse	12½ cents
Additional horse	6¼ cents
Every cart or two-wheeled carriage of burthen, one horse, etc.	12½ cents
Additional horse	6¼ cents
Each sleigh or sled of any description, one horse	12½ cents
Additional horse	6¼ cents

In 1818, a new law slightly reduced the tolls on certain classes of vehicles. Also, the revised rates were made to vary with the direction in which the team was proceeding: each wagon going to market with wood, hoop-poles, staves, or barrels with two horses paid 18 cents, but returning, it paid only 9½ cents. Every load of timber, lime, staves, hoop-poles or other articles not the product of the farms paid 12½ cents; returning it paid 9½ cents. No toll was ever charged for crossing the bridge to attend church, to do jury duty, nor to serve as a court witness.

The old toll bridge extended from the north end of Washington Avenue, Schenectady, to the junction of what are now Schonowee and Washington Avenues, Scotia, where the vehicles turned west across the Dyke. The Dyke was a broad bank of soil built up about six feet above the muddy marshland bordering the river. It reached from the bridge to the Glen Sanders home and the small village of Scotia where the land lay higher. The road along the Dyke was lined with poplar

trees, and on festive occasions, such as Lafayette's trip down the Erie Canal, the tree branches were decorated with candle-lit paper lanterns. One eyewitness, John Sanders, recalled that:

> In 1812 it was no uncommon scene to witness eight or twelve stages on the Scotia Dyke, leaving or entering Schenectady and in one instance the writer counted fourteen in a continuous line.

As time went by, repeated attempts were made to make the bridge toll-free. With this end in view, the old bridge was regularly indicted by the grand jury on the charge that it was unsafe. Expert engineers were hired to examine it and pass upon its safety. But a strange thing had happened when the extra piers were added to remedy the sagging: these had changed the structure from a suspension bridge to a type unknown to the engineers. They were therefore unable to compute the strains and stresses, and the cause died.

Various other schemes, in which ethics formed no part, were devised both by those who wanted a free bridge and by those who wanted the revenue from tolls. Many an acrimonious discussion ensued. Finally, in the winter of 1872-1873, a law was drawn up for the purpose of freeing the bridge. The law provided for its purchase, for $12,000, by the City of Schenectady and the nearby towns of Glenville, Niskayuna, Clifton Park, and Ballston. In addition, two other bridges, Freeman's and the Aqueduct bridge (four miles downriver) were to be bought for $6,000 each, each town paying $4,000 of the total $24,000. New bridges were to be built, all toll-free. But politics set the towns of the County against the City and many unsavory battles ensued, resulting in the defeat of the free-bridge plan.

In 1874 the Town of Glenville acquired the old bridge at Washington Avenue for $12,600 and sold it piece by piece. Many of its timbers were used in the construction or repair of houses and barns in the surrounding countryside; others were sold to a match company for making matchsticks. The town replaced the old bridge with a new steel one, which was paid for by tolls levied upon all users except residents and property owners of the Town of Glenville, who were its builders. The merchants of Schenectady who made deliveries in Scotia, in order to avoid the payment of tolls, purchased cheap vacant lots there and thus were accorded free use of the bridge; it was cheaper for them to pay a small annual property tax than continuous tolls.

In 1879 the Town of Glenville also purchased Freeman's bridge, then owned by the Schenectady Bridge Company. This bridge too was made toll-free to residents and property owners of Glenville. These two bridges produced so much revenue that property taxes were lower in Glenville than in the other towns of Schenectady County.

When the Schenectady Railway Company wanted to extend its tracks to Scotia and beyond, an arrangement was made by which the railway company shared the use of the new steel bridge, toll-free. This bridge served until the completion of the Great Western Gateway Bridge. Then for a number of years it remained unused. Finally it was taken down and sold for scrap metal. Until a few years ago, the piers remained in the stream. However, they were a menace to navigation on the Barge Canal, which makes use of the river channel, and were eventually removed. Today only the shore abutments of the old suspension bridge survive.

The lower bridge (Freeman's) was destroyed by a spring freshet. Its replacement, the present bridge, became part of the state highway system.

MARKERS FORTY-ONE AND FORTY-TWO: The Coming of the Railroads

On Schenectady's New York Central Railroad depot is a tablet commemorating the advent of the era of railroading:

> April 17, 1926
> To commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the chartering of the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad Company which built and operated the first Railroad in the State of New York.
> This tablet is erected by
> the successors of that company, the New York Central Railroad Company.

George Featherstonhaugh, a resident of the Schenectady suburb of Duanesburg, is considered the father of the first railroad in New York State. His acquaintance with the Englishman George Stephenson,

inventor of the steam locomotive, had aroused his interest in the possibility of steam railroads, and he became convinced that they were entirely practical.

In 1812 he began to write articles on the feasibility of steam transportation. But his articles were frequently treated with scorn; doubters regarded as fantastic the idea of traveling by means of steam power at the incredible speed of from six to 10 miles per hour. One Schenectady wit remarked, "Why, a train couldn't be made to go fast enough between this city and Albany to keep the mosquitoes from eating the passengers."

It is true that the railroad between Baltimore and Washington was in operation a few years earlier than the one between Albany and Schenectady, but neither would have been built had not Featherstonhaugh and others pioneered for many years in advance, fighting against the cruelest of all weapons – ridicule.

By 1823 Featherstonhaugh had succeeded in convincing the influential Stephen Van Rensselaer of the worth of steam-powered trains. When, in March 1826, the legislature granted a railroad charter, Van Rensselaer and Featherstonhaugh were named as directors.

On June 26, 1826, books were opened for subscriptions to stock in the newly chartered railroad – the Mohawk and Hudson. Although the stock was eagerly taken up by capitalists, the company moved slowly. It was more than four years before all the land had been acquired for the right-of-way and all the surveys made.

On the 29th of July, 1830, the ceremony of breaking ground for the railroad took place near Schenectady, a silver spade being wielded by Stephen Van Rensselaer. In September it was announced that the stock had appreciated 10 percent. By the 25th of July, 1831, one year after the ground-breaking ceremony, the road was completed from the junction of the Western Turnpike and Lydius Street (now Madison Avenue) in Albany to the brow of what is now Crane Street Hill in Schenectady, a distance of 12½ miles. Some defect in the "DeWitt Clinton," the locomotive to be used, prevented a trial before August 9. On that day the little DeWitt Clinton puffed into the depot at Schenectady, having made the trip from Albany in one hour and 45 minutes. It was a little four-wheeled engine with a high dome and a smokestack but no cab to protect the engineer. A small tender was attached which

carried the wood used as fuel and a barrel of water for the boiler. By the 10th, two trains were operating each way and making a part of the run at a speed of 30 miles per hour. At first coke was tried as fuel, but it proved unsatisfactory and pine was finally adopted.

The passenger cars were simply stagecoach bodies placed upon trucks and seating 15 to 18 people. On September 9, the DeWitt Clinton was again put upon the rails and succeeded in drawing a train over the road in 45 minutes! It was not until the 22nd that the directors advertised that the train would take passengers. The road terminals were still uncompleted and the train ran only from the junction, as it was called, two miles from the foot of State Street in Albany. Passengers were taken from Albany to the junction by stagecoaches; at the Schenectady terminus the passengers were transferred by stagecoaches to the city.

There was a grand excursion on September 24th, when the train, drawn by the DeWitt Clinton, started off from Albany to Schenectady with three cars, and returned with five, making the return trip in 35 minutes. Spectators from miles around went by horse or on foot to the right-of-way of the new railroad to watch the train go by. The horses reared and plunged as the locomotive chugged along, wood sparks a-plenty shooting back from the tall smokestack and lodging uncomfortably on the faces and in the eyes of the unprotected passengers. It was said that on dark nights the stream of sparks that poured from the stack suggested a giant Roman candle exploding.

When the railroad was fully completed there were inclines in both Albany and Schenectady. At Albany the elevation was 185 feet. The one at Schenectady was 150 feet, the station being at the top of what is now Crane Street.

At the top of Crane Street, known by some of the older citizens as "Engine Hill," a tablet on the building at 803 Crane reads:

> On this site, thereafter known as "Engine Hill," starting from a small brick building used as the western terminal station, the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad Company operated the first steam propelled railroad transportation service in America. The DeWitt Clinton engine, with three passenger cars, was used on the initial trip between the cities of Schenectady and Albany, August 9, 1831.

At this first passenger railroad station was a windlass around the drum of which was wound a rope, one end being attached to the passenger coaches and the other to balance-wagons. The wagons, loaded with stones, ran on a parallel track. If the train was heavy, all the balance-wagons were used as counterpoise; if lighter, some of them were left off. The windlass was operated by a stationary steam engine. Thus when the train was raised from the foot of the plane, the balance-wagons were heavier than the train, and vice versa for descending. When the train reached the bottom, horses were attached. They pulled it to the station on the bank of the Erie Canal Basin on Dock Street (now Erie Boulevard) nearly opposite Church Street. These inclines were eliminated in 1841 because more powerful locomotives were then available.

In 1842 the first of four depots on State Street was built. It was destroyed by fire the following year. The station immediately replacing it served until 1885, when a larger one was put up at the same site. By 1908 the city had so grown that a still larger one was needed. At that time the present New York Central station was erected.

The first rails were wooden timbers with thin strips of iron spiked to their surface. Frequently the spikes would work loose and the iron would roll up in "snake heads," whereupon the engineer would stop the train and drive down the spikes. Later the rails were heavier lengths of flat iron strips fastened to large flat stones.

The timetable was a very simple announcement:

> Carriages will leave the head of the incline plane ¾ of a mile from the City of Schenectady at the following times: ½ past 4 in the morning; 8 o'clock A.M.; 12 o'clock noon; 2 o'clock P.M.; 4 o'clock P.M.
>
> To leave Albany at the head of Lydius Street, two miles from the Hudson River at the following times: ½ past 6 o'clock A.M.; 10 o'clock A.M.; ¼ past 4 o'clock P.M.
>
> The locomotive Engine "DeWitt Clinton" will depart in the following order:
>
> Leave head of plane at Schenectady at 8 o'clock A.M. and 2 P.M. Head of Lydius Street, Albany at 10 o'clock, A.M. and ¼ past 4 P.M.

Passengers taking the carriages at Schenectady at ½ past 4 in the morning will arrive at the Albany station in season for the 7 o'clock morning Steamboats. Those leaving at 12 o'clock, in ample season for the afternoon Steamboats. Also those taking the Locomotive at 2 P.M. will arrive at Albany in season for the 4 o'clock Boats.

Passage may be secured at the office of Messers Thorp's & Sprague's in Albany and Schenectady. Price including stage fare, 75¢.

John T. Clark
Agent of the M & H Railroad Co.

N.B. Passengers who may desire it will be accommodated at each end of the Railroad with tickets at 50 cents. Transportation at the ends of the Railroad will be furnished by Messrs. Thorp and Sprague.

There was great variation in fares for the single trip either way:

From January 1 to April 12, 1833	62½ cents
From then to September 6	75 cents
From then to March 9, 1834	37½ cents
From then to April 17, 1836	50 cents
From then to August 25,	62½ cents
From then to January 1, 1840	75 cents

From the very inception of the idea of a railroad, political influences, made strong by the progress and popularity of the Erie Canal, fought against the iron horse. The canal route from Albany to Schenectady was a roundabout course. Westbound it climbed many timetaking locks at Cohoes and then followed the bending pathway of the lower Mohawk before it reached Schenectady. The actual distance via canal was between 22 and 23 miles. A railroad traveler could go from one town to the other in about an hour, saving several hours against the tedious canal trip through the locks, to catch a westbound packet out of Schenectady

or to catch a boat down the Hudson to New York. The new railroad speedily became a very popular route.

But the competition between land and water routes continued. The year after the chartering of the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, the Canal Board set up the following toll rates:

3¢ per ton mile for pelts and peltry except deer, buffalo, and moose skins.

1¢ 5 mills per ton mile for flour, salted beef, pork, butter, cheese, whiskey, gin, beer, and cider.

1¢ 5 mills per ton mile for all of the State's agricultural products not specifically named.
[Horses and cows were considered within the term "agricultural products" and each horse was estimated at 600 pounds.]

1¢ per ton mile for household furniture, brick, sand, lime, stone (unwrought or rough hewn), clay, earth, leached ashes, iron ore, pot and pearl ashes, mineral coal, pig iron, slate and tile for roofing, and timber, square or round in boats or scows.

5 mills per ton mile for cotton.

2¢ per mile per 100 solid feet for timber in rafts.

1¢ per mile per thousand feet for boards planks, scantlings reduced to one inch measure, lath, and other sawed stuff less than one inch thick in boats or scows.

2¢ per mile per thousand feet for the same lumber in rafts.

These rates and the following two paragraphs appear in the March, 1827, minutes of the Canal Board:

> Boats used chiefly for the transportation of passengers west of Utica, fifteen cents per mile and east of Utica twenty cents per mile, or six cents per mile on the boats and two mills per mile on each passenger, at the election of the proprietors, providing they render such satisfactory accounts of the number of passengers as may be required, and make such election when their boats commence business for the season.

Each passenger transported in freight boats and over twelve years of age, two mills per mile.

The canal interests placed restrictions on the railroad by providing that it should not carry freight in the months when the canal was open for navigation. But restrictions could not curb the iron horse for long, and, as an outgrowth of the Mohawk and Hudson line, Schenectady became a center of activity in railroad projects.

By the end of 1832 another railroad, running from Schenectady north to Saratoga, was completed. Coaches of the Schenectady-Saratoga line were hauled from the depot on the eastern end of Railroad Street through a tunnel under State, Union, and Front Streets, thence back of the houses on the eastern side of Washington Avenue to the covered bridge over the Mohawk at the end of the street. The railroad tracks crossing the bridge consisted of eight-inch timbers on which strap-iron rails had been fastened. These "tracks" were laid in the center of the bridge on top of the plank floor in such a manner that the left wheels of westbound wagons straddled the rail on the north side of the center, and eastbound wagons straddled the other rail. Thus there were two lanes for continuous wagon traffic; neither, of course, could be used while a train was crossing.

The roundhouse for the railroad was at the Scotia end of the old bridge. There a locomotive was attached to draw the train westward about a half-mile to the "sand bank" and thence over the right-of-way now used by the Delaware and Hudson Railroad.

In 1835 another railroad was projected from Schenectady westward to Utica in competition with the Erie Canal. At first it carried only passengers, but in 1844 it was allowed to transport freight during the winter months while the canal was inoperative. The condition, however, was that it should "pay to the State equivalent in amount to what would have been paid had the goods been transported by boats."

Two years after this railroad to Utica was completed, the government, recognizing that trains would be far superior to stagecoaches for transporting mail, granted the road a contract as a mail carrier.

In 1845 another railroad was built, from Schenectady eastward to Troy. For the next eight years all these railroads were separately owned and operated, but in 1853 they were consolidated. Sixteen years later, in 1869, this company merged with the Hudson River Railroad (which ran from New York to Albany) under the corporate name of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad. This consolidation resulted in a continuous line of rails from the Atlantic seaboard to the Great Lakes, which greatly aided in the development of the West.

After the Civil War, more local railroads were built. In 1866 the "Athens Branch" (now controlled by the New York Central) was run from Athens to Schenectady. In 1873, a railroad was opened from Schenectady to Duanesburg, connecting with the Albany-Susquehanna line. In 1883 the West Shore Railroad (now part of the New York Central) was built on the west side of the Hudson and the south side of the Mohawk to Buffalo.

ADVANCES IN INDUSTRY

GENERAL ELECTRIC 5000 KW TURBINE-GENERATOR
This Vertical Turbine built for the Chicago Edison Co., stands as a monument in the G-E Schenectady Works

MARKERS RECALLING ADVANCES IN INDUSTRY

MARKER FORTY-THREE:
The "Big Shop" (The Locomotive Works)

As the 19th century opened, Schenectady's major industries still were shipping and boatbuilding. But this era came to an end with the fire of 1819, which destroyed the city's docks and warehouses and ended its usefulness as a port. The old port area was rebuilt as a residential section, and so it remains today.

A period of lethargy, as far as business was concerned, followed the fire. New industries were sorely needed to put the city back on its feet. The first of these to emerge was the building of locomotives. A tablet commemorating the development of this industry formerly stood on North Jay Street near the corner of Erie Boulevard:

> LOCOMOTIVE INDUSTRY
> Established 1848 by Norris Brothers.
> Reorganized 1851 by John Ellis.
> American Locomotive Company 1901.

When Schenectady became a thriving railroad center with lines extending to Utica, Saratoga, and Troy, it seemed logical to try manufacturing locomotives here. In 1847, Platt Potter, John Ellis, and a number of other prominent citizens met to consider the possibility of establishing such an industry. As a first step, they invited the Norris brothers, locomotive builders of Philadelphia, to come here to discuss the prospects. Only one brother could find time to make the long and tedious trip, but he was so impressed that he took a favorable report back to Philadelphia.

The Norris brothers estimated that an investment of $50,000 would be needed to launch the enterprise. Of this, $40,000 was subscribed by Schenectadians and $10,000 by the Norrises. One citizen who doubted the wisdom of the whole idea argued, "Once the railroads entering Schenectady are all supplied with locomotives, what will you do with

the locomotives after you have built them?" But on January 20, 1848, the Schenectady Locomotive Engine Manufactory was formed, with Daniel D. Campbell as president, Simon C. Groot as secretary, and John Ellis as business agent. A plot of ground was purchased south of the Erie Canal and east of Fonda Street (now North Jay) and construction of the necessary buildings started. Before the end of the year the new plant produced its first locomotive, the "Lightning," for the Utica and Schenectady Railroad. But trouble was brewing, for the anticipated demand for locomotives did not materialize. The company's affairs went so badly that the Norrises decided to abandon the project and the plant was idle for a year. The final blow came in February, 1851, when the real property was sold by the sheriff for taxes.

But Schenectady did not lose its new industry, for in 1851 the company was reorganized by the original investors, minus the Norris brothers, as the Schenectady Locomotive Works. Although John Ellis, a talented Scotsman, had had no previous experience in building locomotives, he assumed the leadership. This was the company that was to prosper and become the cornerstone of the American Locomotive Company in 1901.

On June 1, 1851, the reorganized company received its first order, from the Canandaigua and Corning Railroad Company. This order was for a "Great Western" type of locomotive that had such interesting specifications as these: "diameter of boiler, 46″; length of boiler, 12′; firebox, 58″ and 53½″ by 49″; cylinders (inside), 16″ by 22″; drivers 5½′; 6′ track gauge." Another order, for four locomotives, followed shortly from the Michigan Southern Railroad Company. These were completed in 1851, boosting the plant production for the year to five locomotives.

Recognizing the need for expert direction in the complex business of building locomotives, Ellis appointed Walter McQueen as his chief engineer. McQueen was a mechanic of outstanding ability and introduced many improvements in design. So notable were his innovations that Schenectady-built locomotives were often called "McQueen Engines."

In 1882 McQueen, then a vice-president of the company, and Charles G. Ellis, who had become president in 1878, had a serious quarrel. McQueen joined the Hon. Charles Stanford, a State Senator, in forming a rival locomotive company. They purchased land on the western edge of town and erected two large factory buildings. But Senator Stanford

died suddenly and the buildings were never equipped. McQueen became reconciled with Ellis and returned to his former position. The vacant buildings later became the factory of the Edison Machine Works. They are now Buildings 10 and 12 of the General Electric Company's plant.

Meanwhile the locomotive business had been growing. In 1852 the Works employed 250 workers. Prosperity carried into 1853 with orders coming in rapidly. New machinery was installed to increase production. By 1854 the goal of building a locomotive in eight days was achieved, then exceeded. The following year 37 locomotives, worth $10,000 apiece, were completed. Business continued to go well in 1855 and 1856, but in 1857 a far-reaching general business panic crippled the nation's economy. In consequence, only two locomotives were built that year. The Works was closed for part of 1858 and only four locomotives were completed.

During the Civil War the Locomotive Works reached a new production high, as the government commandeered its entire output. As a matter of fact, besides furnishing many valiant soldiers, Schenectady made a number of significant industrial contributions to the war effort in addition to locomotives. Another Schenectady firm, the Clute Brothers Machine Shop, built the turret engine for the *Monitor*. This craft was the famous "cheese box on a raft" that ended the South's naval supremacy and made possible the enforcement of the blockade of southern ports. The *Monitor* was something new in naval design. She presented very little surface to enemy fire and carried amidships a revolving turret, 20 feet in diameter. From the turret two large guns could keep up a steady pounding with the heaviest shot used up to that time. Her first engagement, at Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862, was against the South's ironclad *Merrimac*. Only the day before, the *Merrimac* had won such a decisive naval victory there that the North had good grounds for fearing an invasion up the Potomac to Washington itself. The *Monitor* outmaneuvered and crippled the *Merrimac*, turning the tide in the North's favor.

Clute Brothers Machine Shop also took part in another interesting enterprise. In the summer of 1870 the idea of a boat that would navigate beneath the surface occurred to a Captain Ray, a retired naval officer who lived in Schenectady. The next year he built a device that could proceed under water and discharge a torpedo.

The plans for the boat were drawn by the captain and the work on the device was done in the Clute Brothers shop on the east side of the Erie Canal near Liberty Street. The details, of course, were kept a profound secret by the inventor who attended to all the work of construction.

When it was finished it resembled a mammoth cigar about 12 feet long. The motive power was carbonic acid gas which was stored under high pressure in a steel tube, but the manner by which it propelled the boat was a secret which died with the inventor.

After the submarine was completed it was placed in the Mohawk River near the Scotia bridge. Stories concerning the strange craft had leaked out so that a considerable crowd stood by to watch its working. The test was a decided success. Captain Ray stood on the bank and caused the craft to run under water for a certain distance, discharge its torpedo, and blow to pieces a large raft of heavy timbers which had been anchored in the river. Having accomplished its mission it returned to its starting place.

The captain went to Washington to interest the government but the War Department refused to consider the boat or to advance any funds to the inventor to allow him to continue his work. Failing to secure aid from his own country, he went abroad and offered his invention to the Sultan of Turkey. The Turkish government recognized the merits of the boat and furnished the captain with funds enough to return to Schenectady and pursue his work.

The captain returned and began to perfect his device but died shortly thereafter. A deep mystery still surrounds the last days of this pioneer of the submarines.

The end of the Civil War was followed by a sharp decline in business; and in the midst of this depression fire once again struck a major Schenectady industry. On June 26, 1866, a blaze broke out in the Locomotive Works, near the north end of a building known as the Second Machine Shop. The fire raged southward and consumed most of the main buildings. It took several years to rebuild the plant and get it going again stronger than ever; and in the meantime a general decline in prosperity seriously affected the city.

Discussing this period in his book *Schenectady: Ancient and Modern*, Joel Henry Monroe says: "When business paralysis was everywhere present in Schenectady, some of the active citizens undertook to inject

life into the community by associating themselves together in a society which they called the 'True Blues.' The conception was quite unique and the plan was broad enough to give the aggregation the character of a burlesque, a carnival, or a real Mardi Gras." Monroe wrote his history in 1914; had he been writing today, the activities of the True Blues might have reminded him of the massive prosperity rallies staged by the NRA (National Recovery Administration) of the federal government during the early 1930's, in an effort to dispel the nation's fear and pessimism over the depression. Seen in this light, the True Blues become interesting enough to warrant a digression at this point.

The society was formed in July, 1867. Its members included Schenectady leaders of all sorts – businessmen, members of the faculty at Union College, clergymen, and civic officers. Their headquarters was in Fuller's Hotel at the corner of State and Canal (now the site of the Masonic Building at State and Erie Boulevard).

The True Blues may or may not have helped Schenectady recover from the industrial doldrums. But the society did produce a series of spectacular "events" which a modern chamber of commerce might envy. The events included two parades in 1867; two parades in 1868; a "carnival and bazaar" in 1869; and a "Grand Carnival Concert" and parade in 1870.

The first parade was on Monday afternoon, August 19, 1867. It formed at a lumberyard on Green Street and then passed through the principal streets of the city – from Frog Alley (now Washington Avenue south of State Street) to the College Hill (now Nott Terrace). In the parade, Romeo wooed Juliet on a float appropriately furnished with a balcony. Other floats carried King Lear, Hamlet and Ophelia, an obese Falstaff, medieval knights in armor, lovely Dulcineas, Brother Jonathan in his red, white and blue trousers, and Sister Prudence. One section of the parade held, in addition to "Yankees and Brigands," costumed Mexicans, Hungarians, Spaniards, Irishmen, Dutchmen, Turks, Africans, Italians, and "Orientals." A corps of Scottish bagpipers in highland dress cavorted from curb to curb, playing their pipes. The school board marched in a body, and a bogus police force protested with the crowds along the line of march. A locally prominent racehorse, Dexter, paraded resplendent in brass-trimmed harness. "Hard Times" passed in review and so did a circus of bogus animals, including a white elephant "just imported from Siam" and a number of bears.

Incongruously, one huge dray carried a cage holding only five hen turkeys and a huge gobbler.

Continentals and National Guardsmen in uniform, veterans of the war of 1812, and the Zouaves made up a division that won continued applause by their precise military movements.

One of the floats ribbed the postmaster; it carried a post office labeled "Male in – It's a boy!" Another lampooned the "Athens Cut-off," a million-dollar dream of the Vanderbilts and Hubbards in which an extension of the New York Central Railroad would run from Carman to the Hudson River near Athens, where ocean vessels could be loaded with wheat for the European market.

Much more than an "also-ran" was a black catafalque bearing, in an open casket, a silver brick marked "Eighteen Tons." The brick symbolized the Schenectady Silver Mining Company, a corporation formed by local businessmen who had invested in a worthless California silver mine. This brick showed up again a few weeks later in a second parade.

At midnight on September 5th the town was suddenly awakened by the roar of a cannon to witness a grotesque procession winding its way up State Street to Crescent (now Veterans) Park. The silver brick, on its black catafalque drawn by a team of caparisoned horses, was being solemnly borne to its last resting place. At the grave, exercises lasting more than an hour were performed. The opening stanza of one of the chants was:

> O Brick, thou child of ruined hopes,
> And must we lay thee in the dust?
> A mountain labored – bro't thee forth,
> To live a day and then to bust.

The following year, on September 3, 1868, the True Blues staged a second carnival. Daybreak was ushered in by the pealing of the city bells, and high noon was announced by the booming of a cannon. The parade, a mile long, started at three o'clock in the afternoon. Music was furnished by Sullivan's Brass Band from neighboring Troy and Kings Cornet Band from Glenville. Sullivan's was a 100-piece band, regally uniformed and led by a giant drum major. The Grand Marshal seated in a Roman chariot was followed by his 450 costumed aides, several, by

the way, impersonating Dan Rice of circus lore. After them a giraffe 16 feet high stalked beside Ho-olah, a baby elephant. Sturdy but fierce-looking pioneers were guarded by a burlesque police force, commanded by an artillery officer in a Revolutionary War uniform. Burlingame's traveling Chinamen came next, followed by Neptune on a float drawn by bespangled horses led by silver bedecked grooms. Most of the paraders were masked.

Also in the procession were the uniformed Haymakers and Base Ball Club of Lansingburg, the Schenectady Base Ball Club, and, led by a 25-piece band, several local orders, including the Good Templars and the Carpenters' Union.

Enthusiastic crowds cheered ladies astride dappled horses. They cheered again at a steam engine eight feet high fitted with furnace, piston rods, and wheels at the side. The engine at one point got too hot and belched such volumes of smoke that it had to be removed to save the crowds from suffocation.

Less dangerous was a mock steam engine on a float labeled "Manufactured by the Buttonhole Company." This engine had a hogshead boiler and beer keg cylinders.

One popular float caricatured the editor of the *Union*. He was represented trying to ride two horses at a time, one marked "Republican," the other "Democrat." Also popular that day was a stationary dray at the corner of Liberty and Center Streets. It held a great hogshead in the charge of an innkeeper of vast proportions. Gaily dressed maidens drew ale from the hogshead and passed it to the men in the crowd.

That day's events concluded with an unmasking and a public dinner at both the Carley House and Given's Hotel.

The New York *Herald* ran a feature story on the carnival, while *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* showed a full-page picture of the procession. The editor of the Albany *Express* said he "had seen fantastic parades in Albany and New York, but, compared with the True Blues of Schenectady, they were perfect failures." Never before had anything like it been seen, in numbers, in costumes, in caricature and burlesque, in style, and in artistic effects.

This daylight celebration was followed a few weeks later by another midnight parade. Held on October 12-13, this parade was two miles long. It was a burlesque on a water system that the City Council had wanted adopted but which the city had overwhelmingly voted down.

The system belonged to a private concern that had been supplying the city with water. On this moonless night the "flambeaux of the Mystic Order of the True Blues" flooded the old town with a sea of light, revealing the jewels of the brotherhood bent on interring the "Water Bill." A brass band headed the procession, followed by a float containing the Water Plan. The float was drawn by six horses wearing white trappings and led by grooms in white uniforms. The design represented Veeder's Hill, on the top of which was a reservoir in which "every creeping thing" was to be seen. From this supply gushed a stream of water 12 feet high, and from each corner of the float a hydrant threw a steady stream of water. At the foot of the hill, engines were pumping the water from "Veeder's Pond." At each hydrant imps with huge tumblers were doling out water to the thirsty. On the reservoir was painted "PURE WATER" but what the imps offered was an ugly muddy mixture.

Following this elaborate float came the grave diggers with picks and shovels and after them six "carpetbaggers" with satchels labeled "Conditional Contracts." At the center of the parade was a float bearing three huge banners. One banner showed the city commissioner seated at a table "concocting the plan and drinking sherry cobblers." A second banner depicted the scene at the polls. The third carried a painting of an old abandoned pump representing the condition of the water system. Arranged in triangular form, the banners concealed a bell that mournfully tolled the death-knell of the water bill.

King's Cornet Band of Glenville had the post of honor on the left of the parade. The band preceded a master of ceremonies in priestly robes and then the Chief Fiend sitting on a throne drawn by a team of horses bedecked in white, as were the grooms leading them. All of the participants wore hoods to add a sort of mystic touch.

The burial service was begun by the singing of an "aqueous dirge," the last lines of which ran:

> Brethren, gently lay the body
> In the grave – and drop a tear;
> All our hopes now lie in toddy,
> Or in drinking lager beer.

The body of the bill was placed in the grave which was surrounded by blue lights. A eulogy was pronounced, a poem was recited by the Chief Fiend, and a ballad was sung, the last stanza of which ran:

Now good night ye mourners few
Fare thee well, "six hundred true,"
Till Gabriel blows his judgment trump –
Draw your water through a pump.

The procession wended its way slowly back to the True Blues Headquarters led by dirge music. The crowd dispersed as the city clock struck two and the town sank into its usual nighttime silence.

Early the next year, from January 27 to February 8, 1869, the True Blues held a "Grand Carnival and Bazaar" in the newly completed armory. This was the initial use of the city's first armory.

The bazaar offered daily programs at numerous booths run by prominent Schenectadians. These men and women were costumed to fit the motifs of their booths: Italy, Poland, Japan, Arabia – all the oriental and western world and every period of American life were represented. An early New England kitchen, an early New York dining room, and even a Comanche Lodge were recreated along the gas-lit galleries of the armory. Other booths presented Rebecca at the Well, Shakespearean characters, and, of course, the perennial fishpond. A "Museum Booth" displayed such curios as a small operating engine resting on a three-cent piece and studded with diamonds, a large picture of the Burning of Schenectady, some walrus tusks, a whistle made from a pig's tail, Revolutionary War muskets, a 1702 Bible, a small sword uncovered when work was started on the new armory, and an early Dutch salt cup.

It cost $4,000 to run the bazaar that winter of 1869 but it made money. The True Blues gave $1,000 in profits, as a permanent endowment, to the Home of the Friendless, the local home for aged women.

In its fourth year, the Order of the True Blues produced its final public offering. On September 6, 1870, they held in Union Hall, at the corner of State and Jay Streets, a Grand Carnival Concert and, on the next day, staged their last parade. The city was thronged. Special trains were run from Albany, Troy, Saratoga, Ballston, Utica, and Syracuse. One Albany train was made up of 13 coaches, jammed with passengers.

The parade exceeded, by all odds, the previous ones and took three full hours to pass a given point. It was briefly delayed at its onset by the stampeding of a yoke of oxen hauling a replica of the Cardiff Giant.

Other floats in the parade included the following:

An old Franklin press being operated by a comic printer's devil and two "female" compositors.

An iceberg, lambasting the government and William Seward – Union College, Class of 1820 – for purchasing Alaska. (Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, had negotiated this purchase from Russia in 1867.)

The Albany-Schenectady train. It was horse-drawn and the masked passengers kept leaving and reboarding their moving cars.

A water-sprinkling cart hauled by the temperance leader Susan B. Anthony.

An eight-foot high steam man.

An old carriage, said to have been used by Washington on his trip, in 1783, to Fort Schuyler.

Other features were a yachting club in sailing garb, Heat and Cold or Fire and Frost, a Shaker family, Napoleon and the Prince Imperial, knights, crusaders, cavaliers, and men and women in the costumes of various nations. Old Neptune and the 18-foot giraffe, first seen in the 1868 parade, came out again for the True Blues' farewell show. They held one more meeting, on October 2, 1871, but here the record closes.

These rallies staged by the True Blues must at least have helped Schenectadians to forget their money troubles; some individuals may even have been inspired to invest capital in the city's future. In any case, the retirement of the True Blues coincided with Schenectady's recovery from the industrial doldrums. By 1872 the Locomotive Works had been rebuilt and business was far better than ever before. In that year the Works, now known locally as the "Big Shop," employed 800 people and produced nearly 100 locomotives. The figures were still higher the next year. In 1875 a depression occurred which resulted in a long shutdown the next year. But the growing West was creating new demands for locomotives, and by 1893 the Works had 1,800 people on its payroll. In 1901 it built 417 locomotives, or well over one per day.

In that year (1901) the Schenectady Locomotive Works merged with seven other companies in various eastern cities to form the American Locomotive Company. Immediately after the merger, the "Big Shop" expanded across the Erie Canal into an area between Front Street and the Mohawk River. Many new buildings were constructed

as the business continued to grow. By 1907 the Schenectady plant employed 6,200 workers and built 942 locomotives in one year. During World War I the plant produced several hundred locomotives for the Allied Nations.

During these years both ALCO and the General Electric Company were experimenting with electric locomotives, and straight electric locomotives were built in Schenectady for many railroads. By 1924 the two companies were also experimenting with diesel-electric locomotives. This marked the beginning of a significant trend. Little by little the railroads began changing from steam to diesel-electric power. Nevertheless, the all-time peak in steam locomotive production was not reached until 1944, when 1,354 steam engines were built. After that the decline was swift. The last Schenectady steam locomotive was completed in June, 1948, and since that time all ALCO locomotives have been diesel-electric. In 1948 about 80 percent of all diesel-electric switching locomotives in service on the railroads of the United States were built by ALCO at Schenectady.

During World War II, ALCO again made a notable contribution to the country's military effort. At the time of the Civil War it had produced 84 locomotives for the government; for World War I it had turned out several hundred. In the third great crisis it produced not only a record-breaking number, but in addition some 6,000 tanks of various designs, as well as tank destroyers, which accompanied the fighting forces throughout the war, from El Alamein to the Battle of the Bulge. Military tank production was resumed at the Schenectady plant during the Korean War.

In 1955 the name of the firm was changed from the American Locomotive Company to ALCO Products, Inc., in order to better reflect the variety of products manufactured by the company in its seven widely scattered plants. These products include springs and forgings, oil drilling equipment, missile components, and nuclear power plants. A new nuclear laboratory was opened by ALCO at Schenectady in 1956.

Recently several of the largest buildings which were used for making steam locomotives have been demolished. Those which remain have been streamlined in their assembly operations to expedite the manufacture of diesel-electric locomotives and the numerous other products of the Schenectady plant.

MARKERS FORTY-FOUR AND FORTY-FIVE:
Edison and the General Electric Company

Only half of Schenectady's famous slogan, "The City that Lights and Hauls the World," can be attributed to the world-wide renown of its locomotive industry; credit for the other half of the slogan must go to the General Electric Company.

On Building 3 of GE's Schenectady plant stands this tablet:

> Sixtieth Anniversary
> of
> General Electric
> The people of Schenectady have erected this tablet to commemorate the birth of the General Electric Company. Sixty years ago today, When Thomas A. Edison and his associates incorporated the Edison Electric Light Company.
> Erected October 15, 1938
> by the
> Schenectady Chamber of Commerce.

Edison had first entered the electrical business by founding this company in 1878. When his Pearl Street power station in New York City began operation on September 4, 1882, it started a chain reaction that eventually reached every part of the United States. Not least affected was the City of Schenectady.

The business of generating electricity at one central location and distributing it to light lamps and run motors at remote locations developed with great rapidity. Along with it grew the need for generators, switch-gear, and other electrical equipment. Foreseeing the need, Edison had established in 1881 the Edison Machine Works on Goerck Street, New York City, to manufacture electrical apparatus.

Once the Pearl Street operation had proved itself, Edison began to issue licenses to businessmen in other communities to set up systems similar to his own. By 1884 about 20 local electric-lighting companies had been established. In 1885 there were 31, and in 1886, 48. As the business expanded, the Edison Machine Works outgrew its Goerck Street quarters and Edison dispatched agents in various directions to seek suitable sites for a new factory.

One of these scouts was told to look over the situation in upstate New York. When he was passing through Schenectady in the spring of 1886, he noticed the two empty factory buildings which had recently been built by Walter McQueen when the latter was planning to become a competitor of the Schenectady Locomotive Works. McQueen's plans had collapsed and the almost-completed buildings stood idle in plain sight from passing trains. These buildings were reported to Edison, who decided to look them over in person.

He was favorably impressed and offered $37,000 for the property. The owners held out for $45,000. Thinking that the establishment of the Edison Machine Works at Schenectady would be good for business in the city, a group of local merchants subscribed the money necessary to make up the difference. The deal was closed, and in a short time the newly acquired factory began turning out the generators needed for the new electric generating stations which were springing up all over the country.

The establishment of the Machine Works in Schenectady is commemorated by a tablet on Building 10 of the GE plant:

> In this Building and in the
> Building on the Right
> Thomas Alva Edison
> Established
> The Edison Machine Works
> in the year 1886
> - - - - - -
> From this small beginning grew
> The Schenectady Works
> of the
> General Electric Company
> This tablet erected 1928.

At this time the electrical manufacturing business was becoming more diversified as electric street railways sprang up everywhere. In the spring of 1889 Edison merged the various Edison manufacturing operations into a single corporation, the Edison General Electric Company. The Machine Works at Schenectady was the largest component in this merger, but there were also a number of plants in other cities.

When the Edison General Electric Company was formed, it was the largest electrical manufacturing business in the country. But it had a close competitor in the Thomson-Houston Company at Lynn, Massachusetts. The rivalry between these two companies was intense. There

were bitter disputes over technical aspects of electrical equipment and lawsuits over patents. Recognizing that progress was being retarded by this continual conflict, the two companies decided to join forces. Announcement of a merger was made on June 1, 1892. The name selected was "General Electric Company." Charles A. Coffin, the outstanding leader of the Thomson-Houston Company, was chosen to head the new company. Edison remained as a member of the board of directors, but not as a company official. Schenectady was chosen as the location for the company headquarters.

The first decade after the formation of GE was a period of rapid expansion in the electrical industry. The electric light was steadily replacing the gas light and kerosene lamps. The electric trolley was taking the place of the horse-drawn streetcar in cities all over the country. The electric motor began to take the place of the steam engine as a source of power for industry. All this brought an increasing volume of business to the newly-formed company.

Less noticeable, but even more significant than the growth of the electrical manufacturing industry during this period, was a subtle change in its character. Early electrical equipment was built by rule of thumb mixed with a kind of instinctive "know-how" on the part of the pioneer designers. This gradually changed during the 1890's and early 1900's. The industry began to depend more on science and engineering.

A significant part of this change was played by one of Schenectady's best known citizens, Charles Proteus Steinmetz. Coming here in 1894 after having spent two years at the company's Lynn plant, Steinmetz brought with him a new approach to the solution of problems of electrical design. He was a brilliant mathematician and engineer imbued with the true spirit of scientific investigation. Under his leadership, careful experimentation and calculation became fundamentals in design work.

Other indications of the increasing emphasis on technology were the establishment of the Standardizing Laboratory, now the General Engineering Laboratory, in 1895, and of the Research Laboratory in 1905. The original objective of the former was to insure the accuracy of the company's test work by careful calibration and maintenance of the necessary instruments. Gradually this function was extended to include the design and construction of new instruments, and later to include a wide variety of engineering development work. The objective of estab-

lishing the Research Laboratory, on the other hand, was to provide a component where scientific investigations could be made separate from the company's regular design and production components. Willis R. Whitney directed its activities for many years. Under his guidance the Research Laboratory achieved world-wide reputation as a center of scientific inquiry.

MARKER FORTY-SIX: The Curtis Steam Turbine-Generator

In March, 1903, an event occurred which was to have far-reaching significance for General Electric's Schenectady Works. It was the first test of a new kind of steam turbine-generator. The event is commemorated on a plaque attached to one of the first such generators which the company built:

> The First Large
> Curtis Steam Turbine-Generator
> Capacity 5000 Kilowatts
>
> This machine was designed and built by the General Electric Company for the Commonwealth Edison Company and was operated in the Fisk Street Station, Chicago, from October Second, 1903 until May twenty-ninth, 1909, when it was replaced by a Curtis turbine-generator of greater capacity. It was, when installed, the largest steam turbine in existence.

Up to that time the conventional method of making electricity commercially was by using a large, reciprocating steam engine to drive an electric generator. The new method was the invention of Charles G. Curtis. He had brought his idea to the company in 1896. His plan was to rotate a shaft by directing jets of high-pressure steam against small buckets on the perimeters of discs attached to the shaft. After two years of experimentation, opinion was divided as to the practicality of the idea. At this point William LeRoy Emmett made suggestions for certain changes in design. By 1900 the first of two turbines jointly designed by Emmett and Curtis was ready to be tested. It met every expectation. Work was then started on a much larger unit – one of 5,000-kilowatt capacity. This was sold to the Commonwealth Edison Company of Chicago. Immediately after its successful test in March, 1903, it was shipped to Chicago where it was placed in service in the new Fisk Street

generating station. It soon proved its ability to operate steadily day and night, month after month.

This new turbine-generator required only one-tenth the space and weighed one-eighth as much as the reciprocating equipment which would have been required to do the same job. Clamor for similar turbines arose at once from electric power companies all over the country. Thus was born the department which soon became, and has since remained, the biggest single unit in the entire General Electric Company.

MARKERS FORTY-SEVEN AND FORTY-EIGHT: Later Leaders in GE's Progress

World War I forced the General Electric Company into an entirely new activity. Charles A. Coffin had relinquished his position as president, being succeeded by E. W. Rice in 1913. The leadership of both men has been recognized by means of markers. On Building 3 just inside the main gate is this memorial:

> Charles Albert Coffin
> A quarter of a century ago employees of the General Electric Company established a fund in testimony of their regard for
> Charles Albert Coffin
> This portrait is their gift to
> the company which he created.
> Dedicated 1928

On the corner of Washington Avenue and Rice Road stands another plaque:

> Rice Road
> dedicated to
> Edwin Wilbur Rice, Jr.
> A great pioneer of the electrical industry who had the vision, competence and patience of the investigator—the daring and restraint of the practical engineer.

Urgently needed during World War I was radio equipment capable of transmitting across the ocean. Dr. Ernst F. W. Alexanderson, one of the company's widely known consulting engineers, who had been working with high frequency generators, designed equipment that became the foundation of the first great transoceanic radio system and enabled

the United States to communicate with its allies and the American Expeditionary Force in France.

The company also provided highly efficient electric propulsion equipment for the Navy and radio for the Army Signal Corps.

Under the leadership of Owen D. Young and Gerard Swope, who took over the reins from Coffin and Rice in 1922, a new era began in the history of the GE. Boom times following World War I brought a rush of business to the electrical manufacturing industry in the United States. GE's Schenectady plant was busier than ever before. More and bigger motors, turbines, generators, and other kinds of apparatus were designed and built. The wartime radio work expanded into a great, new, commercial activity. Laboratory work achieved a new prominence.

C. A. Hoxie, of the General Engineering Laboratory, developed a pallophotophone which permitted sound to be recorded on the same film as pictures, thus eliminating problems of synchronization. This was the beginning of talking movies. Steinmetz built his famous artificial lightning generator which solved the problem of testing insulation, lightning arresters, and other electrical equipment under conditions closely resembling those of a stroke of natural lightning.

In the Consulting Engineering Laboratory, Alexanderson was working on the applications of vacuum tubes in two main fields, radio and power.

The Research Laboratory undertook a comprehensive investigation of almost every aspect of the incandescent lamp, which resulted in many important improvements. Dr. Albert W. Hull and others made significant contributions in the field of vacuum tubes. Dr. W. D. Coolidge and his associates developed more powerful x-ray tubes. Dr. Irving Langmuir's work brought him the Nobel prize in chemistry in 1932.

The depression of the 1930's sharply curtailed the growth of American industry. General Electric no more managed to escape its effects than any other company. Sales which had reached $415 million in 1929 slumped to $136 million in 1933. But the tide turned again and the electrical manufacturing business was expanding steadily at the outbreak of World War II.

Because of its character and scope, World War II presented more formidable electrical problems than had any previous conflict. But a visitor walking into the offices of the General Electric Company at Schenectady during the war years would have found little to indicate

the dynamic nature of the company's participation in the war effort. Except for the armed guards at the gate and the identification badges worn by the employees, everything appeared normal. Actually these offices were the nerve center of one of the world's biggest and most complex war machines.

When the National Defense Program was first announced, the company volunteered to do its share. Then, little by little – and more and more – the company participated in war work. What began as a part-time job turned into a full-time one with overtime.

Although many of the products manufactured by the company for war purposes were similar in name to ordinary commercial items, the great majority were new in design. Among the principal war products built in Schenectady were aeronautical devices, aircraft gas turbines, generators, gunfire control equipment, hydraulic gun control equipment, industrial control equipment, industrial heating, motors, search lights, synchronous converters, turbines and turbine-generators, voltage regulators, welding equipment, wire and cable, glyptal solutions, insulation materials, silicones, electronic tubes, radar equipment, and radio-communication equipment. The Schenectady Works was four times awarded the Army-Navy "E" for excellence in production of war materials.

To meet the demands of war production the company more than doubled its working force. At the same time it had to find replacements for thousands of employees who entered the armed services. Some of the new employees were part-time workers. Men and women who worked in the company's offices during the daytime went into the shops and put in a short shift of extra work in the evening. Lawyers, real estate agents, insurance salesmen, clerks in stores, and many others did factory work after hours. When the dismissal bell rang in Schenectady schools, many teachers and students hurried down to punch a time clock at the GE works.

Significant changes followed the end of the war in 1945. The company's headquarters were moved to New York City. Phillip D. Reed and Charles E. Wilson succeeded Young and Swope at the helm. Some of the company's manufacturing departments moved out of Schenectady; others enlarged their facilities at their existing locations. A notable example is the immense new building erected at Schenectady for the Large Steam Turbine-Generator Department. This is one of the biggest

manufacturing buildings in the world. Great expansion occurred in the company's laboratory activity in Schenectady. The Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory was established in 1946 when the Atomic Energy Commission signed contracts with the General Electric Company for research and development in atomic energy. At the same time a new multi-million-dollar building was constructed for the Research Laboratory on a commanding knoll overlooking the Mohawk River a few miles east of Schenectady. It was formally dedicated on October 9, 1950, just 50 years after Willis R. Whitney came to Schenectady to found the original research unit.

During the postwar years a number of smaller laboratories also were established by individual departments of the company, and the General Engineering Laboratory was doubled in size. This continuing expansion in laboratory facilities and activities was in the mind of the company's president, Ralph J. Cordiner, when he said recently:

> We have a dream for Schenectady . . . a dream and a goal. And that is to see this city become the industrial research center of the world.

MARKER FORTY-NINE: Charles Proteus Steinmetz

Perhaps the most colorful, probably the most brilliant, and certainly the most famous figure ever to make his home in Schenectady was Charles Proteus Steinmetz. His name is indelibly associated, not only with the General Electric Company, but also with Union College and with the city itself.

After coming to Schenectady in 1894, Steinmetz lived at various locations, his last and longest residence being on Wendell Avenue. The house is no longer standing, but a memorial tablet marks the site:

> Site of the Home of
> Charles Proteus Steinmetz
> From 1903 until his death in 1923
> A pioneer in electrical engineering, he was president of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, consulting engineer of the General Electric Company and Professor of Engineering at Union College. A civic leader, he was chairman of the Schenectady School Board and president of the Common Council. He served both the broad world of science and the interests of his home city.
> Erected 1945

Steinmetz was born April 9, 1865, in Breslau, Germany, where his father was employed as a railroad lithographer. His given name was Karl August Rudolf, but in applying for American citizenship he anglicized the first name to Charles and chose as his middle name Proteus, a nickname given him when he belonged to a student mathematical society. In Greek mythology Proteus was the fabulous "Old Man of the Sea" who could change himself at will into innumerable shapes and substances; Steinmetz's friends, in dubbing him Proteus, may have been thinking of his volatile temperament or of his remarkably diverse interests.

Early in his school career Karl August revealed his extraordinary intelligence and he was therefore sent to the University of Breslau, where for six years he majored in technical subjects. During these college years, he became an ardent Socialist and in 1888 was obliged to flee from Germany to avoid arrest and imprisonment. For a year he lived in Zurich, Switzerland, where he attended the Polytechnic School and startled the professors with some of his ideas about electricity.

At 24 Steinmetz came to the United States. He went to work for Osterhold and Eickemeyer of Yonkers, a firm which manufactured electrical equipment. When in 1893 the General Electric Company absorbed this firm, GE also got Steinmetz. He started out at the Lynn plant, but the next year came to Schenectady, where he spent the rest of his life. As the years passed, Steinmetz came to be recognized as one of the few true geniuses in this new science of electrical engineering; his value to GE as a consulting engineer was incalculable.

Steinmetz himself considered that his most important professional contributions were three specific achievements. The first, resulting from his investigations into magnetism, was his discovery of the law of hysteresis. This enabled engineers to forecast accurately all losses of electric power which would occur in electrical apparatus made of iron. A second key contribution was a symbolic method of calculating alternating-current phenomena. This method made the efficient design of alternating-current equipment feasible. The third great contribution was his theory of electrical transients, which made possible the development of lightning arresters to protect high-voltage transmission lines.

From 1902 to 1913 he was professor of electrical engineering and from 1913 to 1923 professor of electrophysics at Union College. He also lectured widely on electrical subjects throughout the country.

Among the honors conferred on him were membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the presidency of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. He was the author of a number of standard textbooks and of a great many scientific papers.

Dr. Steinmetz took great interest in all social and economic problems, especially those near home. Above all, he was concerned about the education of the city's children. In the early 1900's Schenectady's population was expanding rapidly, and the public schools were overburdened. By 1911 there were more than 3,000 children who could not attend school full-time for lack of classrooms. Therefore, when the late Dr. Lunn was elected mayor, Steinmetz offered him his services, adding that he would particularly like to do something to help improve the school system. The new mayor immediately named him to the Board of Education, which in turn elected him its president, an office he held for four years.

However, at that time the Board of Education was not an independent body but operated under the control of the city administration. The Board therefore had no power to appropriate funds but only to make recommendations to the city's Board of Estimate and Apportionment. This situation prompted Steinmetz to run for President of the Common Council. He was elected by a wide plurality without making a single campaign speech or attending any political rally.

As President of the Common Council he automatically became a member of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. This put him in a position to move for action on the School Board's recommendations. The best proof of his untiring efforts for the children is that between his election and his death seven new schools were built (Central Park, Oneida, Pleasant Valley, Riverside, Van Corlaer, Woodlawn, and Yates) and additions were made to the Schenectady High, Lincoln, McKinley, and Washington Irving Schools.

But Steinmetz's passion for education did not stop with classrooms. Perhaps motivated partly by his own physical handicap (he was a hunchback), Dr. Steinmetz directed the establishment of special classes for subnormal children, separate classes for those with tubercular tendencies, and a school in Mohawkville for undernourished children. As early as 1912 Steinmetz insisted on a specially trained teacher for deaf children. He also caused a school health program to be set up, providing medical attention for all pupils and the full-time presence of trained nurses.

Wherever space permitted, he built playgrounds next to the schools.

As a good engineer, Steinmetz felt it was wasteful to make no use of school facilities during the summer. It also struck him as absurd that many students were required to repeat a whole year because of failure in a single course. He therefore suggested the organization of summer schools for those who needed to make up work, who wanted to take extra courses, or who wished to speed up their education.

But Steinmetz's love for children was a very personal thing, too. For instance, at Halloween, when the pupils had masquerade parties, he often went to one of the schools to greet the youngsters in person and join in the fun.

On the other hand, this complex man was also capable of driving a hard bargain. An amusing story is told of the time he bought the lot on Wendell Avenue where he intended to build a home. Steinmetz thought the price was too high, but the owner refused to sell for less. Since the lot bordered a creek, Steinmetz complained that he would need a great deal of fill before he could build. In fact, he computed the exact number of cubic yards required and estimated the cost. He then proposed to the owner, "I will purchase your lot if you will pay for the fill." The owner agreed to the compromise, and Steinmetz bought the lot for the asking-price less the cost of the fill. What the owner did not know was that the contour of the lot was precisely what Steinmetz wanted, and he had no intention of changing it.

Being one of the company's most valuable assets, Steinmetz also managed to get his own way at GE on occasion. At one point the company decided to prohibit smoking throughout the plant. Signs to this effect were posted. When Steinmetz, who was an inveterate cigar smoker, saw them, he started a one-man strike. After he had failed to appear in his office for several days, the company sent to inquire about his absence. Steinmetz is said to have replied tersely: "No smoking, no Steinmetz." The rule was promptly withdrawn, and Steinmetz, cigar in mouth, went back to work.

Steinmetz died on October 26, 1923. On the day of his funeral, all schools were closed and their flags remained at half-mast for a week.

THE EVOLUTION OF UNION COLLEGE

UNION COLLEGE

South College Dormitory, Built in 1813.

MARKERS RECALLING THE EVOLUTION OF UNION COLLEGE

February 25, 1795, was a day of great celebration in the town of Schenectady, for an arduous 10-year battle with the New York State Board of Regents had come to an end. The board had finally acceded to popular will and granted a charter to Union College, the first college chartered by the Regents and the first ever to be founded upon the demand of a free citizenry.

It must have been an especially gratifying day for two men in particular, one branded a scant 20 years earlier "the rebel parson" and the other a man of wealth, military leader, politician, and ardent supporter of the new Constitution.

Hardly the type of people to go about the task of founding a college . . . yet without these two, the Rev. Dirck Romeyn and General Philip Schuyler, Union might never have been born. Considering the type of men instrumental in founding a college in upstate New York, it is hardly surprising that it should be revolutionary in concept. It was to be non-sectarian, open to men of all faiths, creeds, and races. It was to instill in its students an appreciation for their country through the first course in American history ever offered by a college. It was to look as much to the present and to the future as to the past; hence, the introduction of French as a substitute for Greek – a totally unheard-of practice – and strong stress upon natural sciences and mathematics – an even more radical idea. Such ideas about education make the views of the so-called progressive educators of a later day seem pale by comparison.

Union's history is deeply interwoven with the history of this nation's birth and to a lesser degree with the history of the French Revolution. The college's immediate beginnings go back only 10 years to a mem-

orable event which is commemorated today by a marker on the corner of Union and North Ferry Streets:

SCHENECTADY ACADEMY
Erected on this corner by
the Dutch Church
1785
Used by Union College
1796 - 1804
City Hall
1805 - 1815

The academy was the creation of Romeyn and the Consistory of the First Dutch Church. It was frankly established as a ruse.

Since 1779 two petitions urging the creation of a college in upstate New York and bearing more than 2,000 names had been submitted to the legislature at Kingston. Both had gone ignored, largely due to the press of the Revolution and because more than one town was bidding for the honor.

If the establishment of a full college in Schenectady must wait until it was politically opportune, Romeyn figured chances would be considerably improved if he could make a practical start. On February 21, 1785, only three months after his installation, the Dutch Reformed Consistory resolved

> to construct as speedily as possible with the help of the church, a house two stories high, with two rooms in each story; and on completion of the building of three of said rooms shall be assigned for the use of the school and academy.

Tuition, it was further declared, would be four shillings yearly from every scholar, and, with a hopeful eye to the future,

> if said academy shall become changed into a college, then the president of such college as well as rector of said school, shall be a member of the Dutch Church; and said four shillings for each shall be bestowed upon such poor scholars as the church shall name.

This latter provision was never carried out, as men of several religious persuasions have been selected Union presidents.

Romeyn was elected president of the academy and a building was constructed at the corner of Union and North Ferry Streets. Happily, the Dutch Reformed Church was not alone in its support of the new academy. A number of Schenectady citizens formed the Academy and

Library Company to recruit students and teachers and to contribute books to the library.

The academy prospered almost immediately, despite the fact that its first application for a charter, presented in 1785, was refused for reasons not stated. By August, 1786, there being 103 students, "the Business in attending these in their several pursuits was rather too great for the present number of teachers in the Institution."

The history of the academy during the next four years is scanty, as the minutes of the Academy and Library Company are missing. It appears, however, that Romeyn had difficulties in obtaining and keeping teachers. During this period he corresponded with Colonel John Taylor, later to become headmaster but who declined at this time, stating: "I am afraid your Trustees have limited the salary rather too low to promise themselves a permanent Teacher of that description. Parsimony may prove in some circumstances real extravagance and generosity often is true Economy."

Another attempt to secure a charter for "The College of Schenectady" was on February 29, 1792. Trustees of the academy put up some good arguments. There were "eighty students in the English language . . . and nearly twenty pursuing the study of learned languages and higher branches." The town was willing to grant 5,000 acres for the proposed college and individuals were ready to give another 700 acres. Townspeople had also promised a subscription of $2,500 and the Dutch Church Consistory had offered their academy for college use. The Regents again turned down the petition, this time for lack of adequate capital.

The rejection moved the trustees to try for the incorporation of the academy, and to this end they petitioned the Regents on November 2, 1792, pledging £500 and 1,100 acres of land. This time they were successful; on January 29, 1793, The Academy of the Town of Schenectady was chartered.

At the same time, the Regents appointed Romeyn and Schuyler as the two "visitors" of the academy, responsible to the state for its management. Schuyler's appointment seemed to give the proposed college its needed boost. A man of considerable wealth and influence, he rapidly became enthusiastic about the academy and the idea of making it a degree-granting college. The college was nearer than ever before to becoming a reality, but Schenectady was not alone in the bidding for it. Hudson, Poughkeepsie, Kingston, Lansingburgh, Waterford, Still-

water, and especially Albany sought the honor. That Schenectady was chosen was largely through the influence of Schuyler. When the Regents insisted upon a minimum of $35,000 capital, Schenectadians guaranteed it. On December 18, 1794, the sponsors for the college submitted a detailed list of proposals, ensuring the freedom of the trustees and the president from control by any single religious sect, indicating the minimum salaries of the faculty and the subjects they should teach, and naming the new institution Union College as symbolic of the cooperation that brought it into being.

Granting the charter brought to an end the old academy, which, judging by the legacy it left in terms of students and tradition of high regard for education, more than fulfilled its purpose.

The birth of the college, if not the death of the academy, is noted on a historical marker at the corner of Union Street and Nott Terrace which reads:

> UNION COLLEGE
> Charter granted 1795. Present
> North and South College
> buildings erected in 1813-1814
> from plans drawn by Jacques Ramée

Immediately, the college launched out vigorously on a course not paved by American colleges and universities which had come before it. The motto was not from the conventional Latin, Greek, or Hebrew but French — *Sous les lois de Minerve nous devenons tous freres* — We all become brothers under the laws of Minerva. The faculty consisted of a professor of mathematics, a professor of natural philosophy, and a professor of Latin and Greek. Interestingly enough, the professor of natural philosophy, whose duty was to teach science, was to be paid more than his colleagues — a phenomenon which predates by over a century that which is prevalent today. More to the point, however, the salary differential emphasized the importance of science in the curriculum of the new college.

Romeyn had been offered the presidency of Union, an honor which he richly deserved, but he declined, preferring to serve as a trustee instead. The Reverend John Blair Smith, D.D., president of the Pine Street Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, was appointed in 1797 at the unheard-of salary of $750. He remained as Union's president for

only a year, and during his brief tenure he began the arduous task of building a library. The books purchased showed a much greater proportion in modern science and modern literature than was customary among colleges of the time. This, the introduction of French, the strong stress upon the American history, and the "philosophical apparatus" ordered directly from England doubtless reflect the truly American spirit of Smith, captain in the late war and strong associate of his friend James Madison in carrying through the Federal Constitution in the Virginia state convention.

Following Smith in the presidency was Jonathan Edwards, Jr., son of the great American Congregationalist preacher and one of the architects of the Plan of Union, an agreement formed in 1799 by which the Presbyterians and Congregationalists cooperated in the frontier settlements for nearly 40 years.

In 1804 a most unusual man became president of Union, a man who left an indelible mark on the college, both physically and intellectually. This was Eliphalet Nott, who stayed to run the college for an incredible span of 62 years – longer than any other man who has served as a college president in America.

So many interests and so many talents were inherent in the man that it is sometimes difficult to say which predominated at any one time. But clearly it was Nott, the clergyman, who first wended his way into the Mohawk Valley in 1796 to accept a pastorate in the frontier settlement of Cherry Valley. He carried with him to his new assignment five distinct attributes: he was young, 23 years old; he was newly married; he possessed a master of arts degree from Brown University; he was freshly ordained as a minister in the Congregational Church; and he was brimming over with religious fervor.

The combination must have been effective, for two years later, in 1798, he was called to the ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Albany, a position which proved to be the springboard to fame. Area prominence followed rapidly, bringing with it in 1800 appointment as a trustee of Union College; and on July 24, 1804, he catapulted into the national spotlight with his sermon on the evils of dueling, a dissertation prompted by the tragic death of Alexander Hamilton. Less than two months later he was offered and accepted the presidency of Union, becoming the fourth man to serve as chief executive of the nine-year-old institution.

Thus, whether by accident or predestination, there emerged Nott the educator. Although the revolutionary character of Union's curriculum had been laid before him, he was to add to it. He accepted into Union boys who had, in modern terminology, flunked out of other colleges. The president of another institution once wrote to inquire about a dismissed student, asking Nott if "he meant to take that scoundrel into his college." Nott expressed much of his own educational philosophy in his simple reply: "Yes, and make a man of him."

Perhaps his greatest contribution to Union was its present campus. When he had come in 1804 he was the first president to occupy the building which had been started during Dr. Edwards' presidency. Known as West College, it was located at the corner of Union and College Streets and was constructed at a cost of $60,000. As the college began to prosper it also outgrew its new quarters, which contained a chapel, library, recitation rooms, a residence for the president, and dormitories under one roof. A row of two-story brick dormitories, known as Long College, were added on what is now College Street, but Nott had an even greater plan: He wanted to move the college a half-mile farther east, to a wooded hill which overlooks the Mohawk, the site of the present campus.

What grew out of Nott's desire to move the college was the first planned campus in America. The first building constructed under the plan was South College, which bears the plaque:

> SOUTH COLLEGE erected in 1814. In commemoration of the centennial of this event, this tablet is set October 17, 1914. For many years this house was the residence of the president of the college.

What is not mentioned on the plaque is the architect who designed the campus: Joseph Jacques Ramée. Ramée was brought to this country by a wealthy merchant who wanted him to design a mansion by the St. Lawrence. Nott invited Ramée to Schenectady during the winter of 1812-1813, and induced him to undertake the whole design of the campus.

Actually, work on the new campus had started before Ramée's arrival. Professor Jonathan Pearson notes in his diary that a "horrible plan made by someone" had been accepted in 1812 and work begun shortly thereafter. When Ramée presented the first details of his "grand plan"

in the spring of 1813, the old plans were scrapped and the previous construction was modified to meet the new specifications.

Ramée's grand plan was bold in scope. He turned the campus inside out and established an open treatment completely different from the monastic seclusion of the medieval quadrangle. It was as if, to paraphrase Tunnard and Hope's *American Skyline*, the new campus should reflect Nott's belief that education was no longer for a chosen few but for all who were capable and deserving.

North and South Colleges, a part of the original design, were constructed in 1813-14, but the plan was radically altered after that. Originally, there was to be a rotunda built, but in its place Washburn Hall, a red-brick building reminiscent of railroad stations built during the same period (late 19th century) was erected. The grandiose monument which Ramée planned for the center of the campus was built during the last quarter of the 19th century, but hardly as the Frenchman had envisioned it. Instead of a round building with a portico facing west, a 16-sided affair – believed to be the only one in the western hemisphere – went up, and that only after a long struggle. Begun in 1858, construction soon came to a halt due to lack of money. It took on the appearance of a bomb crater as its yawning foundation lay exposed for nearly 20 years. Even after its completion in 1875, its utility remained a serious problem until, in 1903, a generous gift from Andrew Carnegie enabled the college to make a library of it. It remained the college library until 1960, when Union's one-million-dollar Schaffer Library was constructed through the generosity of Life Trustee Henry Schaffer and his wife, who contributed half of the necessary funds. Today the old library stands as a memorial to Nott.

The move to the new campus on the hill resulted in the sale of old West College at Union and College Streets to the city and county of Schenectady for a Court House, jail, and city offices. While it was so used it was called city hall. The college received in return for it 3,000 acres of land in the county. Strangely enough, the building was repurchased by the college in 1831 for $10,000 to provide for the increasing number of students, and for nearly 25 years it was used for freshman and sophomore classrooms, and also housed the library and science collections. In 1854 it was resold to the city and used as one of the public schools until 1890. Then it was demolished and replaced by a brick building known as Union School. This was demolished in 1960.

But if the move to the new campus was Nott's greatest contribution to the college, he made others. Colleges in the first half of the 19th century were not blessed with multi-million-dollar endowments, with opulent alumni bodies eager to lighten their change pockets, or with big corporations striving to contribute to such a vital cause. Educational institutions were poor, dirt poor.

Thoroughly accepted in those days as a means of raising money was the lottery, and to that means Nott directed his attention. Little did he realize what was in store for him. He fired the opening gun of the campaign in 1805, winning an $80,000 lottery grant from the State Legislature after a masterful lobbying campaign. It was nearly three decades later, in 1833, that the smoke and dust of battle finally subsided, with Nott once again the winner. The political and financial gyrations which transpired in the interim years are a story in themselves. At times he appeared to have victory in his grasp, while at others it seemed all was lost. For a while even the college buildings were mortgaged to the cause.

As the lottery battle progressed and waxed hotter, reactions set in. The trustees, poor ignored creatures that they were, squirmed but were powerless to control the human dynamo on the campus; and cries of irregularity and fraudulent use of college funds rang out in high circles. Professor Pearson, college treasurer from 1850 to the 1870's, wrote in his diary in 1855 that the lottery was the "greatest curse that ever was called down upon Union College."

Whatever the feelings at the moment, all more or less ended well. The lottery eventually brought $276,000 into Union's coffers, $50,000 of which still stands on the books as an "Indigent Student Aid Fund." Nott won vindication after a legislative investigation, but to be safe, decided to leave his entire estate — $600,000 — to the college upon his death.

The college prospered in other ways during his presidency. In 1825 Union had a greater student enrollment than either Harvard or Yale and with the exception of a few years held for a quarter of a century the honor of being the largest and the only truly national college in the United States. The fame of Nott the educator, the high reputation of the college, and the excellence of its administration drew students from all parts of the country. It was a popular college with southern students and the class rolls of the years immediately preceding the Civil War show representatives from nearly every southern state. But as the con-

troversy between North and South became more bitter, students from the South gradually withdrew from northern institutions. When the first shell broke over Fort Sumter, the remaining southern students left to join the ranks of the Confederacy.

During the pre-Civil War years the college expanded its curriculum to include chemistry, physics, biology, and geology and introduced the first course leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in science. In 1845 Union became the first liberal arts college to establish an engineering school.

It was also during this period that college social fraternities were born. The first three – all founded at Union – were Kappa Alpha (1825), Sigma Phi (1827), and Delta Phi (1827). As fraternities spread the policy of rigorous suppression of such innocent diversions led devoted fraternity men to transfer to Union, and mostly to its gain.

The founding of the first social Greek-letter college fraternity is commemorated by a plaque which stands at the gateway to Union's century-and-a-half-old Jackson's Garden:

> Erected to Commemorate the
> 100th anniversary of the founding at Union College, November 26, 1825 of Kappa Alpha, the first social Greek letter college fraternity, and in loving remembrance of Daniel Mac Martin Stimson, Class of 1864, distinguished loyal son of Union, a devoted member of Kappa Alpha.

In 1814, when Union acquired its present campus, Jackson's Garden was a tangled woodland through which a brook bounded. It might have remained so except for the ailment of a college professor, or so the story runs.

It seems that Professor Isaac W. Jackson, a mathematics professor, suffered from dyspepsia. One day in 1831 during a particularly painful attack, Nott is said to have turned to Professor Jackson and stated: "Dyspepsia, my dear professor, can be conquered with flowers. Take all that low ground, yonder, Jackson, and make it your garden. Twenty years ago, in 1813, Ramée, the architect who planned these buildings, proposed a garden there athwart Hans Groot's Kill, and now in your spare time you can realize the design and, most of all, come out with a sound digestion."

Captain Jack, as he was nicknamed by the student cadets whom he drilled on Library Field, thus began the labor of love, which over the years, has become the chief tourist attraction of the college and a tranquil beauty spot in the midst of an industrial city.

One unhappy legend clouds the story of the beautiful garden, however. On the night of the first full summer moon in 1672 Alice Van Veer went strolling with her suitor, whom like all other young men in her life, her father had forbade her to see. As the couple sat beside Hans Groot's Kill, her father crept up behind them, and shot her lover dead. Townspeople, irate at this injustice, pursued Alice and her father. They caught the father and burned him alive. A short time later Alice, too, was captured, tied to a tree beside the Kill and burned. There are those who say that when the moon is full, the ghost of Alice can be seen in the garden, near the spot where she was burned, and in the air can be sensed a pungent, lingering smell of smoke.

Before closing the chapter on Nott, some mention should be made of the men who attended Union during his regime. The list is long and impressive; it includes, Dixon Ryan Fox tells us in his *Unfinished History*, a president of the United States, six cabinet secretaries, 13 United States Senators, 91 members of the House of Representatives, 12 governors, 49 important diplomats, some 200 judges, 40 missionaries, 86 college presidents, 15 Civil War generals, and two rear admirals.

Following Nott's death in 1866, the college enters upon a time of troubles, an interregnum which lasts until 1901 and the advent of Frank Bailey, Class of 1885, as treasurer.

Not all, of course, was black during this period, but it must be said that Union was never to regain the national prestige it enjoyed before the Civil War. The college became regional in outlook and desperate in fiscal matters.

Notable during this period was the formation of Union University by Dr. Eliphalet Nott Potter, Union's president from 1871 until 1884. Formed essentially along the lines of Oxford University, the new university, which comprised Albany Medical College, Albany Law School, Dudley Observatory, and later Albany College of Pharmacy, was created essentially as a lobbying group, to make sure its interests were protected in the State Legislature.

It must be said also that during Dr. Potter's presidency the college accumulated $400,000 in buildings and endowment. What was lacking,

however, was the essential harmony for profound intellectual achievement. The 70's and 80's were a stormy period, and now and then the echoes of the storms reached the public ear. That an institution of ancient prestige should develop such drama within itself was interesting to listeners outside, and events lost nothing in the telling. The president found himself opposed by nearly all the faculty. Pamphlets aired elaborate allegation and defense, and there were formal trials before the trustees. Student attendance was undoubtedly affected, and perhaps some benefactions which might otherwise have come to the college went elsewhere.

Yet through all this time the educational work of the college was well done. Among the faculty, Harrison E. Webster (1868) made biology an exciting interest in his classroom and in the field trips which, with student assistants, he directed to great distances. Cady Staley (1865) was a worthy successor of his old master, Professor Gillespie, in engineering. It was a loss to Union 20 years later when he left to become the president of the Case School of Applied Science, but his affection was not weaned away; when he died, he bequeathed $100,000 to his *alma mater*. Other notable members of the faculty included William Wells in modern languages, Benjamin Stanton, R. T. S. Lowell and Sydney Ashmore in Latin, Henry Whitehorne in Greek, Maurice Perkins in chemistry, Ransom B. Welch '46 in English literature, Josiah B. Price '72 in mathematics, and Frank Sargent Hoffman in philosophy.

Frank Bailey's appointment as college treasurer in 1901 brought an end to the time of troubles, and it is fitting that he is commemorated on the Union College campus today with a marker on the building which was built with money he bequeathed to the college:

Bailey Hall
Erected in 1927 Through the
Generosity of Frank Bailey Class of 1885
College Treasurer, 1901-1953
Union College Trustee, 1910-1953

Bailey was not an educator; he was a businessman, and that was what the college needed most in 1901. Although he remained in New York, he exercised a continuous influence on the campus through his representative, Mr. C. B. Pond, who had previously made a living by collecting bad debts. Mr. Bailey quickly established two rules: the college was to

live within its income and anyone who did not satisfactorily adjust his campus bills should leave promptly. The record speaks for itself: In 1901 tuition collections amounted to $3,988.50; in 1902, $6,442.94; in 1903, $15,965.59. – all from a student body which remained at about 200.

Under his capable guidance, the college continued to prosper. In 1901 the permanent funds of the college amounted to only $425,000 (book value). By the time of his death the book value of Union's endowment amounted to over 11 million dollars. Though many gifts came to the college during this time, it should be pointed out that Bailey added to the endowment considerably by selling off college-owned securities at a profit. During the last eight years he was treasurer he accumulated $340,000 average yearly profits. All of this money was put back into the endowment. On top of this, the college received another three million dollars in gifts from Bailey.

Another important event in the college's history was the arrival of Charles Proteus Steinmetz in 1901 to teach electrical engineering. It could almost be said that the gift of Steinmetz was the greatest which General Electric Company made to Union. The electrical engineering department had been established at Union in 1895, largely through the encouragement of General Electric. No significant progress was made, however, until the company generously conceded a considerable part of Dr. Steinmetz's time to allow him to teach at Union.

The world knows of Dr. Steinmetz as a genius in the field of electrical phenomena, but it may not so well know of the pervasive influence he brought to bear upon the whole of Union College. He had much that was good to hear in general faculty and committee meetings. He was likewise a stimulating companion for young men outside the classroom, especially in the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, of which he was soon to become an honorary member. The trustees gave unstinted support to engineering; in 1906 a building (now used for biology) was erected for Dr. Steinmetz's department; somewhat later, by a subscription doubling a generous gift of Andrew Carnegie, a spacious hall was built for general engineering and mathematics.

A marker commemorating Carnegie's gift located in the building reads:

Carnegie Hall
Dedicated April 28, 1910
Generously Provided for by
Andrew Carnegie

By the end of World War I, the college had pretty much regained its position in the select circle of strong, small colleges. Much progress was made, both from the intellectual and physical standpoints, under Presidents Andrew Van Vranken Raymond (1894-1907) and Charles Alexander Richmond (1909-1928). It was during Dr. Richmond's presidency that another marker which deserves note was erected – the one which lists the 26 Union alumni who gave their lives during the war.

The marker, appropriately enough, is located in Memorial Chapel, a unique building on the Union campus. It was completed in 1926 and stands not only as a memorial to the sons of Union but also as a reminder of the traditionally close cooperation between the people of the city of Schenectady and the college. An attempt to raise funds for the building failed in the early 1920's and it was only through the generous support of Schenectady townspeople that Memorial Chapel ever became a reality. In return, the college has always followed a policy of allowing outside groups to use the building whenever possible. As the building where most of the college's lectures and concerts are held – many of them free to the public – Memorial Chapel is probably more familiar to the general public than any other on campus.

In 1934, in the midst of the Great Depression, Dr. Dixon Ryan Fox, eminent scholar, educator and leader, became the eighth president of Union College. The college continued to advance rapidly during his presidency, despite the fact that the country was at war during his last four years. The war was hard on the college – as it was on many institutions – and if it had not been for his wise administration, Union would have found it difficult to continue operating with a faculty and plant designed for 800 students at a time when there was never more than 200.

Dr. Fox died in January, 1945, less than a year before Union's sesquicentennial celebration. In May of the following year, Dr. Carter Davidson was persuaded by the trustees to become Union's ninth president. While it is difficult to assess his presidency from so close a vantage point a number of definite physical advancements clearly stand out. Since 1948 four dormitories – West College, Richmond House, Potter House, and Raymond House – have been erected at a cost of millions of dollars. In 1960, through the generosity of Trustee Henry Schaffer and others, the one-million-dollar Schaffer Library was dedicated, as a plaque in the library attests:

This Library Building
Was Made Possible by a Major Gift
From Henry Schaffer, a Life Trustee
of Union College, and Mrs. Schaffer

Many Areas of the Interior Were
Furnished from Substantial Gifts
From the Following Donors:

Frederick S. Crofts in Memory of His Father
Clarence L. Crofts of the Class of 1872
Two Anonymous Friends in Memory of May I. C. Baker
John L. Sherwood of the Class of 1899
Paul J. Kruesi of the Class of 1900
Gardner Kline of the Class of 1901

James Foundation
Horowitz Foundation
U.S. Steel Foundation
Alco Products, Inc.
Bethlehem Steel Co.
Schenectady Trust Co.
Western Electric Co.
and
Gifts from Many Alumni and Friends

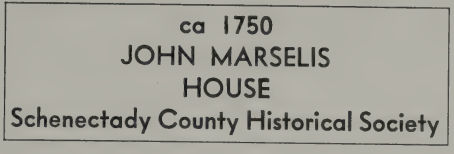
During this same period the college has expanded its student body to 1,250 and increased its faculty to over 100. Proposals, such as an honors program for outstanding students, which earlier presidents had dreamed of but had to reject because of cost, have been initiated.

When Dr. Davidson came to the college its endowment stood at six million dollars. Today, it is valued over 20 million dollars. Such an increase in financial resources has led to a continuing program of strengthening all aspects of the college.

It is significant, therefore, to note that Union College, which for 30 years after the death of Eliphalet Nott fought for its very existence, was ranked sixth among men's colleges in the United States by the Chicago Tribune in 1956.

SCHENECTADY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MARKERS

Historic Structures and Sites



In 1955 a program was launched by a group of downtown Schenectady residents to place date markers on as many of the old, historic structures as could be authenticated. Homeowners were encouraged to look into the histories of their houses and the Schenectady County Historical Society agreed to the use of its seal on the markers after verification of the data supplied.

Since the start of this program the members of the Society's Committee on Historic Markers have examined hundreds of old maps, deeds and other papers giving dates of building construction and have investigated the architecture of the buildings proposed for marking. Wherever satisfactory authentication has been obtained, the placing of a marker of the type shown above has been authorized.

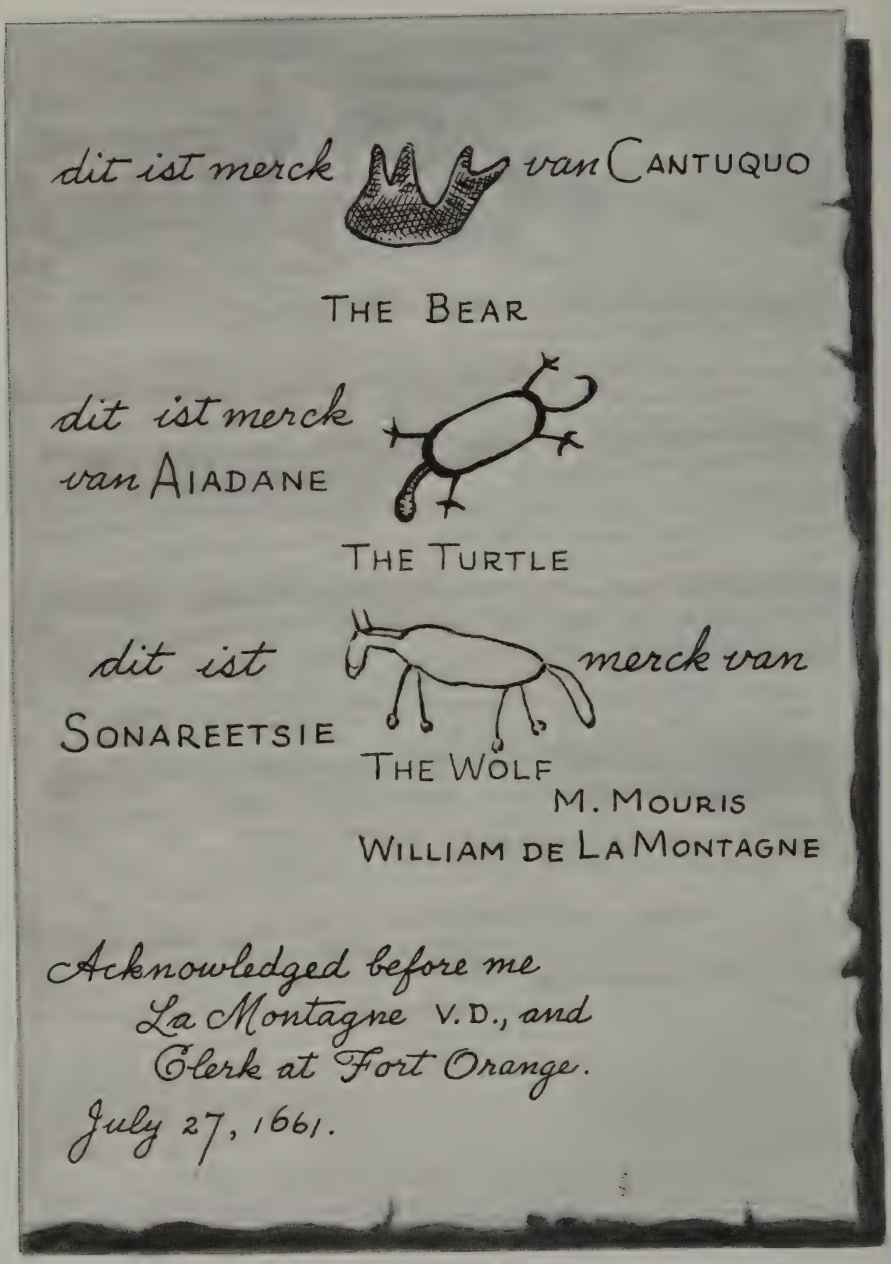
No buildings have survived from the founding days, most of the very early structures being burnt by the French and Indians during the Massacre of 1690. Some buildings, however, date back to the early 1700's and there are a score or more that antedate the Revolution. A stroll through the Stockade Area, which has now been legally designated as an Historic District under the laws of the State of New York, discloses more than 40 buildings which display the date markers of the Society.

Commenting on Schenectady's heritage of historic buildings, the quarterly bulletin of the National Trust For Historic Preservation has said:

> The collection of old structures in the stockade area has not been recreated, nor assembled from various locations, but the houses stand where they were built and have been in continuous use up to 200 years or more. They are not museum pieces in the sense of

appearing exactly the same inside and out as they did long ago, but are living structures which have been adapted to meet changing conditions while retaining as much as possible of the original charm.

APPENDIX



INSIGNIA OF INDIAN CHIEFS APPEARING ON ORIGINAL DEED

Granting Arendt Van Curler permission to settle the "Great Flat" at Schenectady

APPENDIX

TEXT OF VAN CURLER'S LETTER OF JUNE 16, 1643

(Written on the island of Manhattan and addressed to Kiliaen Van Rensselaer in Amsterdam, Holland)

Laud Deo! At the Manhattans, this 16th June, 1643.
Most honorable, wise, powerful and right discreet Lord, my Lord Patroon:

With submissive salutation shall this serve to greet your Honor and your Honor's beloved Lady, who is dear to you, with wished-for good fortune, prosperity, and steady happiness. On the 4th of this instant I received your Honor's favor, and seen and read its contents, whereunto this shall serve for an answer.

Firstly, touching the serious discontent which your Honor feels toward me, because the accounts and books have not been sent you, I have not much to oppose. But therein I have been wholly culpable. For the accounts and books which might be brought to me, I can quickly make clear and ready. But there are boors from whom I can get no returns; and Van der Donck has not once spoken to them thereof, according to his instructions, nor done anything about them so long as he has been in this Colony. I have had, once before this, returns from some boors. Neither head nor tail could be made out of them. For they state everything they expended, but nothing of what they had received; and moreover, enter in the account, to this one, so much — to that one, so much; without once specifying for what that same was given. Everything they have laid out on account of the Lord Patroon, they will know how to specify for what they was expended. But what has been laid out for their own private use, that they know nothing about, and yet can manage to remember what appertains to the account of the Noble Patroon, and to book that. To this I say, that I will never allow this; but that they shall deliver to me a clean, clear, just account, to send the same over to the Noble Patroon, for his Honor's approbation; and so soon as an answer shall be received, shall these then be passed if his Honor so order. Whereupon the farmers reply: We shall then furnish

you an account, as you told us that without it being sent to Patria it is good for nothing. In fine, this also has been neglected. But, please God, as soon as the next [ship] comes, the accounts shall be sent to you. So far as I am myself concerned, I hope that his Honor will not be so displeased as he has been. For I consider myself bound to make good to the Patroon whatever shall fall short in the accounts, or shall be stolen. But so truly help me, God Almighty, I am not conscious, willingly or knowingly, as long as I have been in your Honor's service, to have defrauded your Lordship, or to have sought, in any manner, mine own profit, or seek to enrich myself, as others truly do, who, in justice to the Noble Patroon, should observe who wrong him. I shall tell your Honor no tales, but I shall send over by the next ship sufficient proofs thereof.

As to what your Honor would know, what the construction of the boors' houses will cost, it is impossible for me to acquaint you. I have never had any account thereof, as I have told your Honor before. What regards the cost of my own building, I hope that shall not be wanting. I have kept every note of it. Further, I shall furnish at the same time, an account of what my housekeeping comes to. The Lord shall find therein a few items of what I have presented, or given away, as I have sometimes given presents to the principal chiefs of the Indians, in order that they should maintain good correspondence with each other.

As your Honor does not know how your account stands with the company, this will serve to inform you that I have never settled with M. Kieft [the Governor] nor ever attempted it, because he charged the freight and customs so high that I have invariably referred that to the Lord Patroon. Kieft hath frequently demanded of me to liquidate the account, but I have always deferred it, because I fear imprudently to burn myself with this account; for all the charges, freights and board, which he brought in his account, are directly contrary to the granted freedoms. And your Honor supposes that I here deduct all the freights, customs and duties, wholly from the wheat. The Lord hath always been pleased to excuse me from so doing, for I have never entertained such a thought as to liquidate the account with Kieft. Now, that I understand your Honor's intention, I shall never deliver another handful of wheat to the company, unless they either pay me on delivery, or unless I receive other orders from your Honor. However, I have delivered very little grain; except last year only twelve lasts [approximately 4000 pounds]

and then not a single grain was once on my order. But heretofore the boors have always delivered the grain to the company on their own authority. There is no knowing, sometimes, where all the grain that is raised in the Colony remains, or is consumed. But I shall send the Lord by the first opportunity, an extract of an account which I have, through friendship, received out of the A. Croll's book, [an employee of the Patroon] whereby the Lord shall see and find what has been consumed by the boors, and all paid in wheat, whereof your Honor has been wholly wronged and deprived. But so soon as the accounts of the bouweries are made up, and your Honor hath this extract, your Honor then can see who intends best by the Lord Patroon.

What the Lord, my master, commands me to receive in good regard the counsel of Dominie Megapolensis; and therein to follow his Reverence's advice, I have never failed so to do, but have always communicated to him whatever occurred here, to have his opinion thereupon ere I concluded to undertake anything, and have always thankfully received his reverence's counsel. Further, I shall use my utmost diligence to collect the rest, and to post all the debts and credits, Beavers and Seawan. I shall then, without fail, send you all by the next opportunity. As to what appertains to the duffels [blankets], I have in all I received, not perceived any damage worth mentioning, but got them in good condition.

I have sent the residents all the full number of horses and cows, according to their contract. I have full twenty draft horses, at present, on the Flatt beside the milch cows, but they are all young cattle.

Further, touching the letter sent to your Honor, by the Mahicanders [Indians] our Honor will please not to be surprised; for I came, by great luck, four or five days after the return of the sloop from above, and overtook it there by reason of contrary winds; and received a day or two after the return of this, the resolution of Pieter Cornelissen [Viele] and Broer Cornelissen [Van Slyck]. So that I got on board the sloop, and there hastily wrote a short letter to your Honor, because I thought it was necessary to advise you.

Your Honor further writes that you understand that I had placed [Jan] Labbatie on the Great Flatt, and promised him twenty guilders per month, and your Honor asks what farm work can he do. Those who wrote that to your Honor lie like rogues. For I never thought of it; but my intention was that Labbatie should pass the winter on the Flatt to trade, as good trade is drove there from above during the winter, but

never has there been any talk of monthly wage. For so long as Labbatie has been out of his bounded-time, he has never asked nor demanded any increase of wages, but always said that he should leave that to the discretion of the Lord Patroon. But I shrewdly suspect that this report was sent to his Honor by [Adrian] Van der Donck, whom this undertaken work hath sorely troubled, because he can make nothing by it; and still daily doth he, in my absence, go about finding fault that men expect to make great profit for the masters, but that it will miss. But I have nothing to say. The work is but begun. Yet I hope, please God, to have next harvest as much corn in the ground as the best bouwerie in the Colonie. I have, at present, about ten to twelve morgens [about 2.1 acres] of oats planted, and had there not been so many hidden stumps in the land, I should have had much more sown. But there is not much fallow. From this year there will be still more rye. But generally the first year is the slimmest. I trust firmly that all the bouweries have not had so much to clear as this Flatt alone. It was all hidden stumps and roots, which were not perceived until the plough struck right on them. Your Honor further writes that you do not want any bouweries for yourself.

I shall, therefore, keep together an exact account of all the expenses that have been incurred thereon. I shall, then, request of your Honor, as I have already done, to be preferred before all others for the same Flatt, and I shall then, according to opportunity, contract with your Honor therefor, and willingly meet all expenses. I am assured that there is no bouwerie in the Colonie which shall have been less expensive than this; which shall sooner repay the outlay, and that by grain alone, without counting the increase of cattle. I hope, with God's blessing on the grain, that this bouwerie, in two years, will be free of all expense. I have, last spring, built on this Flatt a farmhouse thirty feet, covered with tiles, for the residence of the carpenters and laborers.

I had, moreover, contracted with Jan Cornelissen, carpenter, for a large farm-house; and he had promised to begin it in mid-April, which he has not yet done. From May to this date I believe that he has not worked fourteen days, but has been drunk all the time. I have demanded frequently of him if he would not go on with the work, and he has always asked for delay; but he will not begin, because I have made a favorable bargin with him. He must build for 700 guilders, a house 120 feet long by twenty-eight feet wide; forty feet is deducted for a dwelling; there remains eighty feet for the farm-house. The dwelling part to be floored

above and below; a cellar twenty feet long by twenty-eight feet wide; a half-jutting chamber for the servants' sleeping room; a small room in the farm-house for the farm laborers; an enclosed stable for the studs, and further to make a horse and cow stable, and what else appertains thereto, and that subject to the inspection of persons conversant with such sort of work, and who understand carpentry. The other carpenters will not build it for 1000 guilders, so that he is not very anxious for the job. I made this contract with him when he was sober, in the presence of Dom. Johannes [Megapolensis] and Mr. Abraham (Staats) and Anthony de Hooges, and committed it to writing on the instant. So that I shall be obliged to have that house erected by others under protest; for the time cannot admit of further delay. It must be covered in against the winter, for the cattle must, above all things, have their stabling. I placed all the reed for the house, last harvest, on a pile of lumber on the spot where the dwelling is to stand.

As regards the tobacco of Albert Andriessen [Brat], and his brother [Arent], I know not otherwise than that your Honor will get the crop, as it was planted in the time of his contract. Your Honor further orders that I should pay this money to Albert here in merchantable goods. All that will go well. But still remains the question or difference between us, which is this: Whereas Albert hath, before this, opposed the placards, the moreover, heretofore, hath scolded the Lord Patroon and the whole council, so that he was condemned in a heavy fine, I shall therefore deduct this fine from the amount to be paid for the delivered tobacco. The fine for which he is indebted, according to law, for opposition to the placard and scandalous scolding, amounts to 312 fl. We should long ago have levied this sum by execution, but I have all along waited patiently for the delivered tobacco . . .

As for the Church, it is not yet contracted for, nor even begun. I had written last year to your Honor, that I had a building almost ready, namely, the covenanted work, which would have been for Dom. Johannes; in other respects, it was altogether suitable for him, so that I have laid it aside as this house was not agreeable to the taste of Dom. Johannes. That which I intend to build this summer in the pine grove will be thirty-four feet long by nineteen feet wide. It will be large enough for the first three or four years, to preach in, and can always afterward serve for the residence of the sexton, or for a school. I hope your Honor will not take this ill, as it happened through good intentions.

Regarding the diamond near Michel Janssen's house, of which your Honor writes that I should send over some more specimens thereof, I have spoken about it to Michel Janssen, and to several others, to engage them to bury it. But they will not do so, apparently because they fear for the labor, and it will terminate badly.

The Lord Patroon is very much surprised that so little care had been taken of the vines which his Honor sent. I planted them in the garden, but they were killed by the frost, like the others brought to the country. I believe, in my opinion, that they did not suffer in the least from the high water.

As regards the formulary which your Honor sent, it shall, for the future, be followed as well for horses as for cows. I should have been pleased that your Honor had sent it before, in order to afford your Honor greater content. Your Honor is, moreover, surprised that Albert Andriesz [Bratt] hath such privilege; that a better inventory is not taken of his stock of cattle. The messenger says that he will not allow any preemption, and what is more, will not give you any part of the cattle, although he purchased the cows while your Honor's contract with the mill company was still in existance.

I shall send by William Turck as many peltries as I can bring in. Your Honor is surprised that all my letters mention haste; this, in short, shall serve as an explanation. The ships are sometimes fourteen days, and even more, at the Manhattans, before we receive any tidings or intelligence thereof, and then, receiving letters, the sloops remain only five, six or seven days, so the letters must then be got ready in a hurry. The Lord says that this ought to be done beforehand, which might easily be, if we had not to answer the Lord's letters. For we could well advise the Lord in one of the affairs of the Colonie. For the future, whatever will be pleasing to the Patroon shall be done, for in all things I am subject to obey his orders inasmuch as it lies in my power.

In regard to your Honor's instructions to inquire what price wheat commands in Virginia, I cannot very well undertake that. But so far as I hear and understand, it goes off well there, but it should be sent there ground into meal. If your Honor should be of opinion to send the ship thither, she should be well provided with well-distilled waters, which are much in demand there, together with duffels and wide linen. Tobacco can be had there at two or three stivers advance on the price in Holland. All the corn which will be delivered to me I shall retain

provisionally by me till further advice, should your Honor be pleased to send a ship. Henceforward I will not give a grain more to the company.

As to the boors selling the wheat for eight or nine florins the mud [four bushels], that is true; but I cannot say who they are. I believe that four or five lasts have been thus sold since last spring, and Van der Donck hath not once been willing to look to it, nor to prevent such a fraud. Your Honor further writes me that I shall speak to Van der Donck and Pieter Cornelissen to second me. They will not endeavor to advance the business of their own office, nor do they try. How can they, then, aid me? And they are the dogs which bite me and still daily seek to render me suspected, which Van der Donck endeavored enough to do, and hath already done, as I can infer from the Lord's writings. But what he had perpetrated and still commits, will be made manifest in its own time. I shall not thereupon talk any further now. Dom. Megapolensis was well aware of his acts.

Your Honor further states that Van der Donck complains of the impertinence of Labbatie. These shall serve thereupon. Van der Donck is very covetous and monopolizing. During my absence at the Manhattans, this Van der Donck came, different times, and arrogantly spoke to Labbatie that he should give him duffels; sometimes sewan, and more such goods. Thereupon Labbatie answered that he had no orders to give out any goods; wherefore had he not asked them of me before, when I was at home? or that he must wait until I should return, and such like things, much more than I can detail. So, then hatred became so deeply rooted that they pursued each other with swords, in like manner as he had done to De Hooges, scolding him as an informer, and moreover struck him; and thus he acts also toward me, blaming me as well to your Honor as to the Colonists, in order to render me suspected. And he imagines, by reason of his ambition, that men will permit him to do what he pleases; and that, through ignorance, much must be overlooked for the sake of the consequences.

As to what the Lord writes, that what concerns the delivery of the cattle proceeded out of the head of Broer Cornelissen [Van Slyck]. That he will not deliver up the same nor pay them immediately, is true. He hath frequently spoken thereof in my presence; and, moreover, hath also endeavored to stir up others thereto.

What regards the resolution to send Willem Juriaensen Bakker out of the Colonie, I have had a very long time ample reason therefor. But

no one would second me. Then he hath publicly abused the Lord and master as a dishonorable man, whereupon he was condemned in a civil fine. This was well. Furthermore, the residents who had driven their trade there with the Indians, to the great loss of the noble Lord, continued this same Willem Juriaensen, and almost destroyed and ruined the whole trade.

As to what the Lord writes, that I should not so strictly regulate myself according to the price of the peltries, and that I must exert myself, as well with authority as with censure, to keep strange traders out, this will serve:

The trade heretofore has always been at six fathoms of seawan. Last year, the residents as well as the colonists gave seven and a half fathoms. I also gave the same. So soon as they saw that I and the company's commissary gave so much, they immediately gave nine, and since this spring, ten fathoms. So at last the trade ran so high that we of the Colony, and the commissary at the Fort, resolved with another to publish a placard, as well for the colonists as the residents and the company's servants, that they should not presume, on pain of heavy fine and confiscation of their goods, to trade with the Indians for furs at more than nine fathoms of white wampum, or four and a half fathoms of black; and that none, on pain of confiscation aforesaid, should go into the bush to trade; and the order was that the officer should prevent it. And he hath not even once attended to this nor even now will he do so. When he was told that he should look to the frauds and abuses, in order to prevent the same as much as possible, he gave for answer: That he would not consent to be the worst man; to others that he would not make himself suspected by the colonists, as his years as officer were few. And it happened, last year, that we concluded together on a placard, that no residents should presume to come with their boats within the limits of the Colonie on confiscation of the same. Thereupon there were great complaints on the part of the colonists, and they gave in remonstrance as to where they should receive goods and necessaries. Whereupon, the council promised the colonists that if there were any to be had at the Manhattans or elsewhere, that I should procure them, on condition for this promise that they would in return pay immediately for wares which they might get from me, and that I should have nothing to do with the transfer of accounts, but to pay me, acting thus as mer-

chant right off. They were all satisfied and promised to adhere to it, and to assist me.

We further resolved, on the next court day to issue another placard for the further strengthening of the first – namely, that no inhabitants of the Colonie should presume to buy any goods from the residents. So it happened that a few days after, a sloop arrived with some goods. Immediately a party of colonists came to me, and said; "This and that are come; nobody must make any purchase there; you gave us the promise." To this I replied; "What I promised I shall perform and accomplish." I inquired if they had any beavers wherewith to buy these goods and wares? They answered: "No! you must purchase them, and debit us with them in the account;" which I was wholly unwilling to do. So that each one went and bought what he wished, as well duffels as otherwise. Dom. Megapolensis and I then sent for Van der Donck, and told him to go quietly with his servant, Hans Vos, and search the several houses. Now he came to visit Reyer Stoffelzen's house. There he gossiped without once making a search, and then went to Willem Juriaensen's in the same manner, and so forth. He further went to Dirk Jansen's mill, where he was told there were three pieces of duffels, and he removed one of them. He further went to the house of Cornelis van Merckerck. There he chatted without once making a search. In like manner he proceeded to Broer Cornelissen's [Van Slyck], where he did not search once, but only asked: "How are ye all here? looked in, and returned back, while he well knew that there were duffels there. Leaving there, he went home. In the same way he went to Claes Janssen van Wyckerck's house, who, he also well knew, had duffels. He said: "Claes, I shall come here tomorrow to make a search. Have you any duffels? Put them away in your cellar, which I shall not search." Claes himself told me this out of his own mouth, and promised to give me an affidavit of it, which I shall send your Honor by the next ship.

Moreover, I had contracted last harvest for the building of a house for Dom. Megapolensis, which should be ready precisely at Christmas. They let the time pass neglected and go by till November. Then I said that I should not allow it to be built; there was hail, snow, rain and wind every day, and expecting that the house would cause great expense in meat and drink, and the work not be advanced, I broke the contract, because they did not perform their promise.

Maryn Adriaensen was, at this time, among us, who offered to sell me a house of oak wood all ready — cross-casings all of oak. So the Domine having consulted with both of us, and concluded that Maryn's house would be a much better bargain than the other, so that I purchased the house from him for 350 guilders. Van der Donck coming to hear of this, got into company, in the meantime, with the carpenters and several others, and there told them that we had issued placards forbidding the colonists to trade with the residents, and whoever this interested should mutiny; that whoever had first concocted this had not only concocted the placards, and that I likewise sought to steal the bread out of the mouths of the colonists. Whereupon, some of them were surprised that the officer should so persuade the people. Some, with others, forthwith conspired to protest against me, and to draw a circle under the protest within which to place their names, so that it should not be known who had first signed it. This protest having been drawn up, some were for driving me out of the colony as a rogue; others wished to take my life. But nothing resulted from these threats. Herein Van der Donck said he would honestly, and to our satisfaction, assist me and the council. But when need pressed him, he then withdrew from me and the council to second them, whereof I shall send your Honor affidavits of two persons who told me so with their own lips. So that your Honor can form, at once, of the opinion of the matter in itself, and what sort of officer you have here, who causes so much injury to the whole colony. He intends next year to return home. He has been to Katskill with some colonists to examine that place, and your Honor may be assured he intends to look for partners to plant a colony there. Borger Jorissen, who had heretofore been in the Lord's colonie, will live there also. He hath let his bouwerie to Brant Peelen for 200 guilders a year, on which Brant Peelen intends to settle his brother-in-law. This shall not be with my consent.

Concerning the bark, about the building which the Patroon had written, so that I might employ it in the colonie to advantage, which was my intention and meaning, but I was dissuaded therefrom. It should be well adapted in breadth to convey cattle, and that about to be built would have been too crank. I have purchased another for 1,100 guilders, which is a very tidy bark, provided with new sails, with anchor and cable; can carry at sea, seven lasts; inland, eight lasts. It has been this spring to the north, and there traded a good deal of seawan [wampum].

'Tis now at the south river to trade. I have spoken to Cornelis Leendertzen and Mauritz Janssen van Broeckhuysen, who returned from that quarter over two days ago, and they told me that it would be a good speculation, for neither the company nor the Swedes had any cargoes there, and there were still seven to eight hundred beavers there, which lay there expecting seawan and other goods, with all which was well provided our bark, which Cornelis Leendersen spoke in the mouth of the river. So that I hope good profit will result there. So soon as she returns, I will, if I can accomplish it, send her with wheat to Virginia, to see if that can be traded there for tobacco. Inquiry shall then be made what merchandise is admitted there, and shall then advise your Honor thereof.

As the Heer Master orders that the day of accounts shall not be changed, his Honor's letter shall be attended to. The Heer Patroon is very much surprised that no mention has been made in the inventory of sheep and swine. This will inform him that the farmers have frequently been spoken to. They say that the swine stray into the woods. We do not know ourselves how many pigs we have. We were obliged to give a number to other freemen, which were forwarded on payment; but your Honor must know that many mishaps have occurred to these. As to the sheep, to count which Mauritz Janssen was appointed; they were correctly counted; but the year after they died off like mice. A part of them were destroyed by the wolves. There are at present in the Colonie, young and old, about fifteen to sixteen sheep.

Further, may it please the Lord to understand, that three islands lie between Broer Cornelissen [Van Slyck] and the Flatt, one of which, right opposite the Flatt, is about twenty to twenty-five morgens in extent, which have not yet been purchased from the owners. I shall allow that island opposite the Flatt, and a portion of fallow to be ploughed, in order to be sowed next harvest with wheat; for on the Flatt I have only sixteen to seventeen morgens which I can have under plow this year. Because there is so much to regulate, I do not wish to have the time of the servants wasted, I have begun on the aforesaid island. By regularity, everything can be done at a proper season; as men have more leisure at present than at any other time, so, please God, there will be full thirty morgens sown next fall with winter grain. I shall, therefore, be obliged to purchase the said islands from the Indians,

though they will ill-bear to part with them. For we are bound now, and hereafter to give the Indians no provocation to rebel.

I have been on horseback with Labbatie and Jacob Janssen [Schermerhorn] van Amsterdam, last year to the Mohawk country, where three Frenchmen were prisoners; one of whom was a Jesuit, a very learned scholar, who was very cruelly treated, his finger and thumb being cut off. I carried presents there, and requested that we should preserve good neighborship, and that no injury should be done either to the colonists or to their cattle, which all the Indians at the three castles have thankfully accepted. We were entertained right well in every friendly maner there. We were obliged to halt a quarter of an hour before each castle until the Indians there saluted us with divers musket-shots. There was also great joy among them because I had come there. Indians were immediately ordered to go out to shoot, who brought us in excellent turkeys. I then thoroughly visited all their castles, and invited all the chiefs of all the three castles to assemble together, and proposed to them to release the French prisoners. But there was no appearance of this, which they refused with good reason. Said they; "We shall manifest toward you every friendship that is in our power but on this subject we will be silent. Besides, you well know how they treat our people who fall into their hands. Had we delayed to reach there three or four days longer, they would have been burnt." I presented them, for the ransom of the Frenchmen, about 600 guilders in goods, to which all the Colonie will contribute. But they would not accept them. But we persuaded them so far that they promised not to kill them, and to convey them back to their country. The French captives ran screaming after us, and besought us that we would do all in our power to release them out of the hands of the barbarians. But there was no likelihood at all of this. On my return they gave me an escort of ten to twelve armed men, who conducted us back home. Within a half-a-day's journey from the Colonie, lies the most beautiful land on the Mohawk river that eye ever saw; full a day's journey long, and mostly contiguous the one to the other. But it is impossible to reach there in a boat on account of the strength of the stream which runs there; and, on the other hand, of the shallowness of the water; but I think that it could be reached with wagons. Two of these Frenchmen, of whom the Jesuit was one, have been to my house last May. They said they hoped that means could be found now to procure their release. So soon as the Indians return from

hunting, I shall endeavor to obtain their freedom. I shall send your Honor, by the first opportunity, the journal of my journey.

I have purchased at the mill-kill, from Jan Michaelsen, a house and a large oblong building, which he bought from Sander Leendertsen [Glen], for 600 guilders, according to his receipt. But I shall pay for it mostly through his account. As a passable barn stands thereon, a good bouwerie can be made there. In the same way, as there is a good barn by the house of Cornelis Teunissen on the Fifth kill, where also a good bouwerie can be established.

Cornelis Teunissen goes also over. He hath given in his account, both debit and credit. There is to his credit an item of twenty pieces of timber which come on account of the yacht. They were sold again at the Manhattans for 100 guilders. There is also a parcel of 100 pieces of timber, which I have delivered to the company for two sloop's freight. Each sloop's voyage lasted six weeks, which should have greatly swelled the freight.

Of the thirty M. stone [hard bricks] which your Honor sent out last year per the Houttuyn, I have not received above ten thousand, as I am told by my skipper, Louwens, and others. The skipper of the Houttuyn retained them for ballast. Your Honor will be pleased not to send any more stone [Brick], for we can purchase them cheaper at the north than those cost which your Honor sent, and they are as large again. The four thousand tiles which your Honor sent are not worth the freight; for they crumble all away like sand. I have not had from these more than ten or twelve hundred good tiles. The rest are good for nothing. The broker who purchased the tiles for your Honor hath grossly cheated you.

I am at present betrothed to the widow of the late M. Jonas Bronck. May the good God vouchsafe to bless me in my undertaking, and please to grant that it might conduce to his Honor to our mutual salvation. Amen.

I expect to send the Heer [Lord] by the next opportunity the accounts; and I intend, if his Honor pleases to consent, to go over [to Holland] next year, as soon as I shall have received his Honor's answer, to request of his Honor a favorable lease of a bouwerie, there to fix my residence in the Colonie for a good number of years, if the Lord spare my life. If your Honor should please to permit me to return home, as I hope, I request, with all submission, that the noble Lord will

please to grant my future wife leave to reside, until my return, in his Honor's house, by Anthony de Hooges. I trust that the noble Lord will not receive damage thereby, for she is a good housekeeper, as I hope the noble Lord shall learn from others. I should not altogether wish to take her over and hither with me; for we are subject to divers dangers from the sea. Otherwise I hope to make my journey to Patria as short as possible.

Neither I nor the Company have had scarcely any trade this year. I believe the residents have conveyed fully three of four thousand furs from above. So great a trade has never been driven as this year, and it would be very profitable, if your Honor could bring about, with a higher hand, that the residents should not come to the Colonie to trade. Otherwise, your Honor will never derive any profit.

Herewith ending, I beg to advise the noble Lord, if I have used any boldness, be pleased to take it in the best part. Happiness to your Honor, and your Honor's beloved wife and children, and that God may preserve you in his grace, is mine, and my future partner's greeting.

Your Honor's dutiful and obliged servant,

ARENDT VAN CURLER

SCHENECTADY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1905, the Schenectady County Historical Society fulfilled the dream of the city's distinguished historian, Professor Jonathan Pearson of Union College. Sixty years earlier he had noted in his journal that:

> It is a thing much to be desired that some Schenectadian would 'endeavor' the history of this old town which has now been inhabited these more than two hundred years. Our antients are passing away fast, family records and traditions are also becoming scarce, and if the materials . . . are not soon gathered, the beginnings of 'Dorp' will be forgotten and unsung.

Others shared his views, but nobody took any definite action. In 1862 Pearson wrote:

> I still get encouraging answers from all with whom I speak about starting a historical society for Schenectady. Yet few, I presume, will be real working members. Besides, even those who would be glad to do something have but a crude notion of what is needed to constitute real historical facts of value – most men are satisfied with mere gossip and floating traditions.

So Pearson, himself, decided to "attempt the collection of some . . . old records and other relics that would illustrate the habits of our lazy old Dutchmen in former years and rescue from oblivion the origin of the city." This collection later became the nucleus of the present Society's library of documents, now numbering over 100,000 items.

In July, 1875, there appeared locally a modest pamphlet entitled "The American Historian and Quarterly Genealogical Record." Its title page stated that it was edited by the "Historical Society" and published by E. Z. Carpenter. Apparently it ceased to exist after a few years. Whether this "Historical Society" was more than E. Z. Carpenter, himself, is not now known, but his voluminous papers have become part of the collection of documents belonging to the present Society.

In 1899 The Netherlands Society of Schenectady was established "to collect and preserve information respecting the early history and settlement of Schenectady and the Mohawk Valley, by the Dutch, and to discover, collect and preserve all still existing documents, etc., relating to their genealogy and history." This organization had a membership requirement of direct male lineage to settlers of Dutch national and linguistic stock, and was not, therefore, a general historical society. Nevertheless, it appears to have made the first organized effort to collect and preserve historical documents of this area. Most of these documents were later given to the Schenectady County Historical Society.

Six years later a number of Schenectady citizens planned a loan exhibition of articles of historic and artistic interest to be held at the Public Library in the month of May. A committee consisting of De Lancey Watkins, Lee W. Chase, Judge Alonzo P. Strong, Miss Mary Backus, Mrs. Judson S. Landon and others arranged the exhibition. It was extremely interesting and instructive.

The exhibition lasted 10 days. After its closing the exhibits remained at the Library, but were not, so far as can be learned, on public display. Those who had contributed to the success of this project then began

to discuss the advisability of establishing a permanent historical society. The organization of such a society was strongly urged by the *Schenectady Gazette*. Public meetings were held and committees were appointed. Articles of incorporation were prepared by Judge Strong and filed on June 30. As a result, the Schenectady County Historical Society was established on July 14, 1905, under the Membership Corporation Laws of the State of New York.

A program of monthly meetings during the fall, winter and spring was set up soon after the Society's organization. As the Society had no quarters of its own, these meetings were held in various downtown public buildings. The Society took over responsibility for the exhibits at the Library but allowed them to remain there. This situation continued for several years. In 1908 a committee was appointed for the purpose of finding a permanent home for the Society, but did not immediately accomplish any tangible result. Action was taken in 1910 to have the exhibits at the Library open to the public on Saturday afternoons and evenings. An attendant was hired by the Society at a modest salary to be in charge of the exhibits at those times.

In December, 1912, the committee responsible for finding a home for the Society succeeded in negotiating a three-year lease for the building at 13 Union Street, which had been erected a half-century earlier to accommodate the offices of the County Clerk and the Surrogate, and was no longer needed for that purpose. The exhibits were moved from the Library to the Society's new home, and this became the location for the monthly meetings.

At this time the membership dues were one dollar per year. As these dues were the main source of income, the Society was not in a particularly affluent condition. It soon became apparent that the rent of $100 per year, called for in the lease, was beyond the Society's slender resources. It was, therefore, reduced by the County Board of Supervisors to the nominal amount of one dollar a year. Some revenue was derived from time to time by renting parts of the building for meetings of outside groups. In 1925 the dues were increased to two dollars per year, but this added only a small amount to the Society's income. The Board of Supervisors for some time before this had arranged to give the Society a subsidy to promote activities which were considered to be in the public interest. A curator was engaged, and the exhibits, which had been growing steadily in number, were opened to the public on weekday afternoons.

In 1941, Miss Anna B. Case bequeathed her home at 720 Union Street, together with an endowment fund, to be used as the headquarters of the Society. Because the conditions of the bequest required the construction of a large extension to house the Society's collections, and imposed other restrictions which were considered to be not economically feasible, the bequest could not be accepted.

In April, 1958, the General Electric Company deeded to the Society the former G.E. Women's Club building at 32 Washington Avenue, "as tangible evidence of its interest . . . and desire to associate itself with those who are working to advance the city's cultural and educational activities." This generous action provided the Society for the first time with adequate and attractive facilities for its collections and activities.

A sufficient number of artifacts had been assembled as early as 1914 for the establishment of a "Colonial Room." Actually this was a collection of furniture and furnishings containing some colonial antiques with various later pieces, which gave the effect of a bedroom in a pre-Revolutionary home, some of the furnishings of which had been replaced in later eras: Federal, Empire and Victorian. This collection, supplemented by many later acquisitions, now occupies three rooms in the Society's present quarters.

The greater amount of space available has permitted also the establishment of a "Gun Room" to accommodate the Society's notable collection of firearms, an "Indian Room" for relics of the early inhabitants of this area, and a "Map Room" for a display of historic cartography. At the same time, the Society's library facilities have been greatly improved, and a concrete vault has been provided to protect the valuable collection of original documents, some dating back to the 1600's.

Late in 1935, the Society's president, Judge James W. Liddle, approached the president of the Museum Auxiliary (Children's School and Schenectady Civic Museum, located in Brandywine Avenue School) to interest this group in serving as an auxiliary to the Historical Society. This arrangement was made, but it was not until 1941 that the group became officially the Women's Auxiliary of the Schenectady County Historical Society.

In 1940 several active members of the Historical Society formed the Schenectady Genealogical Society, with headquarters at the Historical Society building. This group, for a number of years, held regular meetings and embarked on record-collecting projects. As its interests were

rather closely allied with those of the Historical Society, it was absorbed in 1949. With this merger the Society acquired a large collection of copied records of churches, cemeteries, censuses, etc.

Publications have always played a significant part in the Society's activities. During its first 10 years, annual yearbooks were published. In 1936 a periodical called *The Milestone* was published for a few issues. It was revived for a few issues in 1949. Starting in 1957, a quarterly bulletin began publication. This has now entered its fifth year. A leaflet entitled "Guide to Historic Schenectady" was brought out at an early date and has been several times reprinted. A booklet for the first Walk-about of Old Schenectady was published under Society auspices in 1954. This booklet was expanded in 1959 to serve as a guide for those who wished to tour the Stockade Area of the city and observe its historic buildings.

One of the Society's early activities was to participate, along with the Netherlands Society, in the erection of a memorial tablet to Arent Van Curler, placed at the northwest corner of Church and Union Streets where his original town lot was located. At this time the Society also contributed to the erection of a Van Curler tablet in the church at Nijkerk, Holland, where he was born.

More recently this type of activity was revived with the appointment of a Committee on Historic Markers. This came about through a request in 1955 that the Society verify the construction dates of a number of historic buildings in Schenectady and permit the use of its seal on appropriate date markers. Since the original request, the owners of numerous other buildings have made similar requests. Today nearly 50 buildings in Schenectady County display date markers approved by the Society, indicating construction prior to 1825. In connection with this activity the Society has become affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, an organization interested in the preservation of historic buildings throughout the United States.

List of Books

For more extended reading on the history of Schenectady, and the Lower Mohawk Valley in general.

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*"The Burning of Schenectady." ..... Alfred B. Street

*These books may be found in the library of the Schenectady County Historical Society, 32 Washington Avenue.

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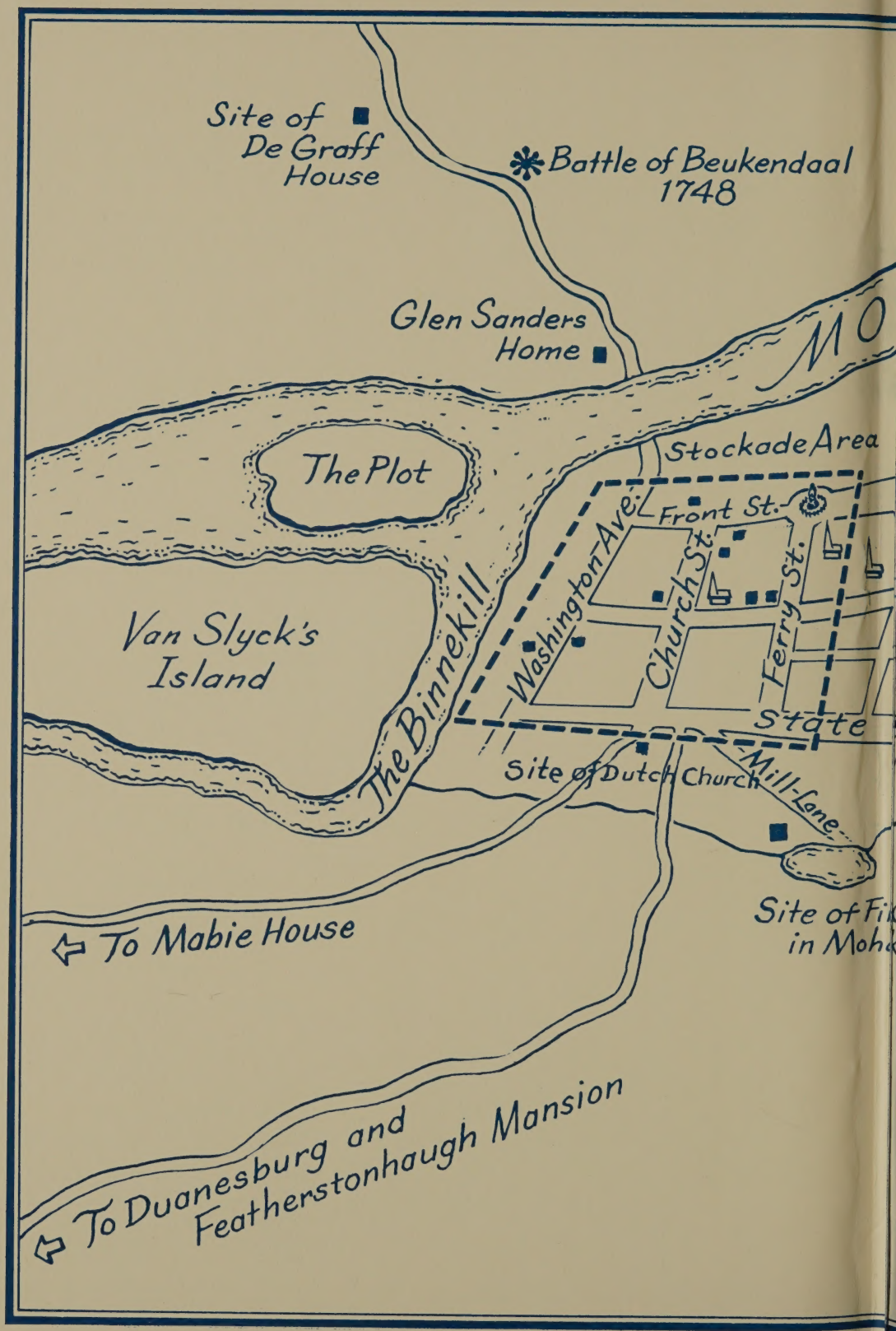
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Battle of Beukendaal
1748
Glen Sanders
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MO
Stockade Area
The Plot
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Van Slyck's
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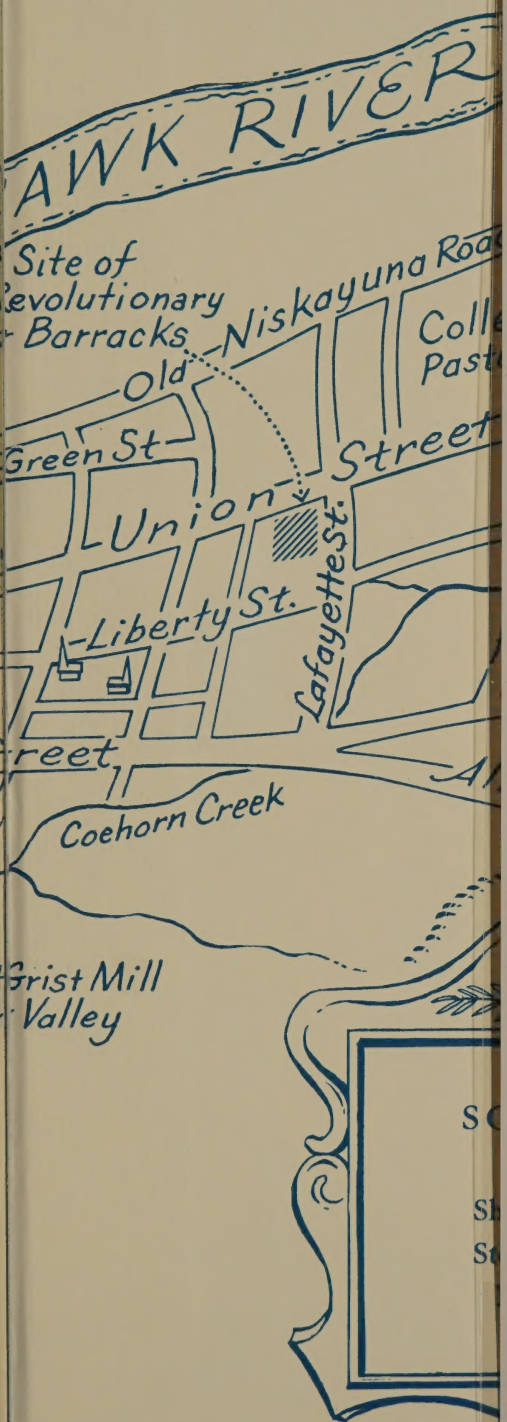

A measure of the character of a community may be found in their appreciation of local history. It is also significant to note the type and quality of materials which are selected for preservation and recognition. An outward manifestation of these interests may be seen in the historical markers erected to commemorate a community's development.

Under the skillful guidance of Dr. John J. Birch a record of historical markers in Schenectady and the surrounding area has been brought together with appropriate remarks which elaborate their cryptic legends. This record of citizen activity reflects both the ancient exploits of former residents as well as modern attitudes. It presents a mirror of the past which lets us see ourselves as others see us.

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HUGH M. FLICK,
Associate Commissioner,
N. Y. State Education Department.

HERE IS AN INFORMING AND INFORMAL HISTORY of Schenectady from the coming of its original settlers in 1662, led by their beloved Arent Van Curler of Holland, down to the present time.

Here one finds the story of the destruction of the settlement, within its stockaded area along the river front, and the massacre of many of its dwellers by the French and their Indian allies from Canada.

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The history of "The Camp" located just west of the old Glen-Sanders mansion, itself a building of 1713, was first used as such by the local Mohawk Indians and later by 10,000 British and American troops, the greatest army the city has ever seen. They were assembled here and sent against the French, which resulted in the capture of Canada. Use of the camp continued on through the Revolutionary War period to the War of 1812.

This is a book that should be in the library of everyone interested in the history of the Mohawk Valley and its adjacent areas, a book that is a significant addition to earlier books on Schenectady's history.

It is published as a Tri-centennial tribute to Schenectady by the Schenectady County Historical Society, the repository of a rare collection of original documents and books pertaining to local history. It is the combined effort of Dr. John J. Birch, Editor-in-Chief, John A. Miller and Dr. John J. Vrooman, Associate Editors, all three of whom are well-known authors of books dealing with various aspects of the history and development of "Old Dorp" from the days of its fur trading to the present atomic age.